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HITLER'S Third Reich

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HITLER'S Third Reich

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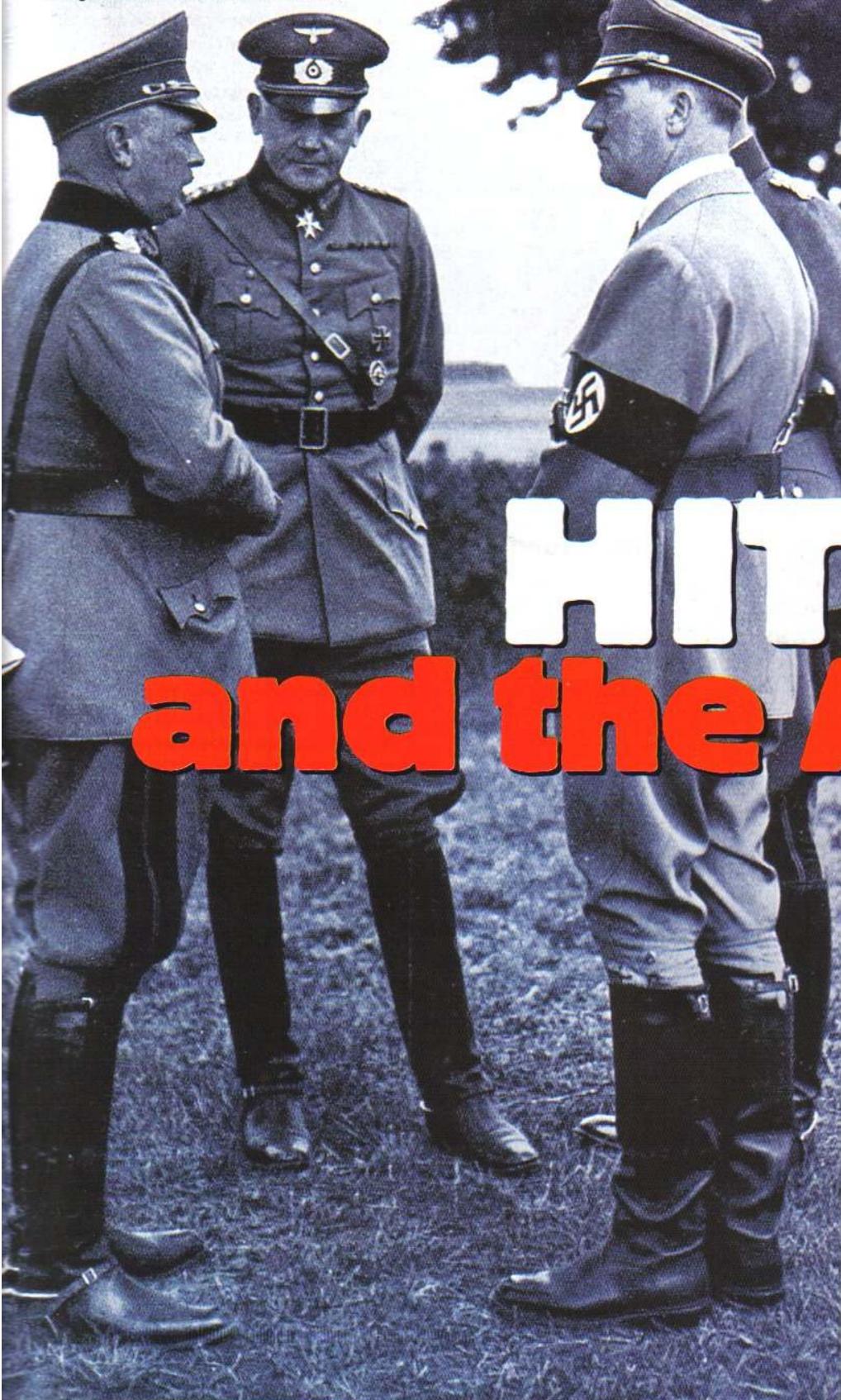
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Hitler in 1935 conversing with War Minister von Blomberg (centre) and C-in-C of the army, von Fritsch. Hitler's henchmen were determined to consolidate Nazi power over the army, and both Prussians fell foul of a dirty tricks campaign organised by the Gestapo. Fritsch was falsely accused of homosexuality. On his rehabilitation in the Polish campaign he sought death in battle, and found it.



HITLER and the Army

IT IS HARD not to admire the German army. Its Blitzkrieg campaigns of 1939-40 captured the world's imagination: they remain the most dramatic military victories of all time. And when the wheel of fortune turned, the German army faced the ever-mounting odds with formidable courage and a professionalism none of its enemies could match. Allied soldiers knew it at the time; historians and statisticians have proved it since: man for man, the German army was the best.

The army was the one institution that could have stopped Hitler coming to power. Throughout its short life, the knowledge that the army could make or break a government had haunted the Weimar republic. Even after 1933, the army could have removed Hitler before he began the war and, once the war was obviously lost, a military coup could have beheaded the highly centralised Nazi regime in an afternoon. Since, according to so many of their post-war accounts, it was only Hitler's idiotic orders that prevented them winning the war, or at least making

Hitler's generals were not in love with National Socialism. But they were in love with the armaments and career opportunities it provided. Nevertheless, from their ranks came the most effective opposition to Hitler.



peace with the west, why didn't the generals kill Hitler?

Had Hitler attempted to seize power by another putsch, as he was urged to do by the SA throughout 1932, there is little doubt that the army would have shot down the brownshirts and probably their leader too. But Hitler was handed power, constitutionally. The then army commander General von Hammerstein mooted opposition, but no general was prepared to rebel against the decision of the revered Hindenburg.

The high command regarded the former corporal Hitler with disdain and was profoundly hostile to the SA, but most

generals objected to the methods – street violence – rather than the declared aims of the movement. Hitler addressed the generals in February 1933, “the hardest speech of my life” as he later described it. They heard him in silence, deaf to his impassioned oratory. But Hitler's foreign policy boiled down to revenge for 1918, his domestic plans emphasised public order and a massive rearmament programme. There were no objections.

DEATH OF A WAR HERO

Hindenburg's death that summer spurred the pro-Nazi General von Blomberg and his sinister chief-of-staff von Reichenau to rush

through a new oath, whereby the armed forces swore loyalty to Hitler the man, rather than the office of President. Of more concern to the aristocratic, conservative officer corps was the continuing public disorder as the SA attempted to continue ‘the brown revolution’. The army saw its connivance at the ‘night of the long knives’ in June 1934 as for the good of Germany: ridding the country of a hooligan menace. But by lending machine-guns to the SS it shared responsibility for an unprecedented act of state terror. Most of Germany supported the elimination of the SA leadership and lauded Hitler's resolve. The danger of allowing governments to shoot citizens without any pretence of legal process passed largely unremarked.

ALWAYS THE CORPORAL

Hitler was acutely conscious of his own humble origins. The ex-NCO prided himself that he knew more about ‘real war’ than his generals, who had spent their war in offices out of sight of the trenches. It is no coincidence that his favourite generals, Guderian, Model, Steiner, Paulus and, above all, Rommel – not a ‘von’ among them – were from more modest backgrounds.

Hitler sacked the army's commander-in-chief von Blomberg over his young wife's sordid past, allegations not entirely without foundation. He also removed his natural successor General von Fritsch on the basis of an entirely fictional homosexual scandal orchestrated by Himler. The generals stood impassively aside. They looked on as Hitler filled the vacancies with the malleable von Brauchitsch, and the now avowedly Nazi and future commander of the 6th army, von Reichenau as his chief-of-staff.

A DANGEROUS GAME

Although non-committal over the Führer's reoccupation of the Rhineland, the General Staff expressed professional fears over the annexation of Austria, the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Its plan for the invasion of the west in summer 1940 was no more than a watered down version of the Schlieffen plan: the most famously unsuccessful invasion in living memory. At every stage there were half-hearted discussions – conspiracies is too strong a word – about removing Hitler before he embroiled Germany in a disastrous war. But even the villainously treated von Fritsch refused to

Left: On 20 August 1934 a vow of loyalty to the “Führer of the German Reich and of the Volk, Adolf Hitler” replaced the Weimar Republic's Constitutional Oath. The vow was intended to reinforce the army's personal obligation to Hitler. It constituted a serious moral dilemma for the 20 July conspirators.



The Reichswehr and the Nazis

THE GERMAN army's reputation survived its defeat in World War I. Many elements in German society were unreconciled to the loss of so much territory under the terms of the Versailles treaty, lamented the abolition of the monarchy, and were, if not actively hostile, then at least coldly neutral towards the new republic. But the army remained the one institution above party and potentially the final arbiter of German democracy.

How the army emerged from its catastrophic defeat in 1918 is significant. It promulgated the 'stab in the back' legend: the claim that the army had not been beaten in the field, but betrayed by red treachery among the workers aggravated by governmental inactivity. This overlooked the fact that the military high command had been in control of Germany since 1915 and only handed back the reins of power to a civilian administration once the front line caved in. Nevertheless, the army's interpretation of World War I found widespread acceptance, and it became a central plank in Adolf Hitler's 'world view'.

The Reichswehr publicly distanced itself from the Weimar republic. General von Seeckt refused to take part in 'constitution day' and fought and won an argument to retain the Imperial colours of black, white and red. He followed a trend, observable even before the Kaiser's abdication, of transferring the army's loyalty from the person of the Emperor to 'the Fatherland', in effect, to the supreme command of the army. This process was only checked by the election of the war hero Field Marshal von Hindenburg to the Presidency. Nevertheless, when asked by the Chancellor where the Reichswehr stood during the 1923 putsch attempt, Seeckt's reply "behind me", was hardly reassuring.

Seeckt retired in 1926. Three years later Germany was in the grip of the depression and the Nazis had become a national force to reckon with. Political activity was forbidden to military personnel and three junior officers were court-martialled for membership of the Nazi party. The Reichswehr was divided: older, senior commanders, commissioned under the Kaiser were content to remain aloof. Junior officers, knowing their career prospects were slim in the artificially tiny army permitted by Versailles, could not afford such Olympian detachment.



Above: A recruiting poster for the Reichswehr (1919-35). So successful was the recruiting drive and the desire for ex-soldiers to join the army that every vacancy for the 100,000 strong army attracted seven applicants. There were consequently many hurdles that the recruit had to surmount, including a minimum height of five feet five inches.

Below: Reichswehr recruits pose on the training ground at Sennelager in 1922. The army of the Weimar government was an immediate descendant of the Freikorps, not the Imperial Army. The law abolishing these units in 1920 had led to the right-wing Kapp Putsch. The Reichswehr was from its inception therefore, infused with an anti-republican spirit.





Above: Erich von Manstein, as an ally of Blomberg and Fritsch, remained out of favour until the outbreak of war. A brilliant exponent of mobile warfare, the Field Marshal nevertheless epitomised the Old Guard aristocratic officer that Hitler despised. The ambitious and always outspoken Manstein was effectively retired in April 1944.



Above: Hans von Kluge converses with Walther Model after the failure of the Kursk offensive in July 1943. Von Kluge was implicated in the abortive attempt upon Hitler's life in 1944, and opted to take poison. Model stayed a Nazi general to the end, and shot himself to avoid capture by the Allies in April 1945.



Above: Hitler greets defence minister von Blomberg at the Nuremberg rally in 1934. The aristocratic general supported Hitler in both the purge of Röhm's SA and in the reoccupation of the Rhineland. The 'Rubber Lion' was the first Field Marshal to be created by the Führer, but was also one of the first victims of the Nazi purge of the army in 1938.

contemplate action, saying "this man is Germany's destiny". The fatalistic former general sought and found death with his old regiment during the invasion of Poland.

The German army carried all before it in 1940, sweeping the British into the sea and winning in a few weeks what a previous generation had taken four years to lose. The scale and speed of the triumph surprised the Germans as much as their opponents. Hitler was triumphantly vindicated: his instinct had proved far more accurate than the generals with all their timetables, ammunition scales, ration strengths and boring details. The generals thought they had stumbled onto a new, revolutionary concept: Blitzkrieg. When Hitler turned his eyes to his real enemy, Soviet Russia, the army followed without a murmur. General Paulus produced a report that proved an invasion of the Soviet Union was logically impossible, but it was disregarded. Consumed by what the Japanese later identified as 'victory disease', the army plunged fatefully into Russia.

Hitler sacked von Brauchitsch in

December 1941, appointing himself as commander-in-chief as he could not find a sufficiently Nazi-minded general. His relations with the high command recovered after the winter but sank again when the 1942 campaign faltered. At his advanced field headquarters in the Ukraine, Hitler started to take his meals separately, he could not even sit down to lunch with his despised generals. And since he did not trust them to change their stories from meeting to meeting, he had every word taken down by stenographers from then on.

VICTORY IN DEFEAT

1943 began with the twin debacles at Stalingrad and Tunis, both largely of Hitler's making and compounded by his subsequent decisions. It ended with the bitter retreat through the Ukraine, the loss of Kiev and the overthrow of Mussolini as Allied forces came ashore on mainland Italy. By early 1944 even the most ostrich-like of the frontline generals knew the game was up. But with few exceptions they soldiered on. Very few

crossed the daunting threshold between mutinous thoughts and treacherous deeds. Even von Kluge, who had twice connived at assassination attempts at his headquarters in Russia, let matters rest until stung into action by the premature reports of Hitler's death on 20 July.

Some generals stayed with Hitler because they actively supported the Nazi regime. Others seized the career opportunities presented by the expansion of the SS, stepping up several ranks as they transferred to command Himmler's new divisions. But the majority acquiesced because Hitler was bribing them. Hitler rewarded many senior commanders for their loyalty, even after public disgrace. Field Marshal von Leeb received payments after his removal in 1941. General Guderian, inspector of armoured forces, was allowed to tour eastern Europe to choose an estate for himself. The generals were welded to the regime by self interest, many were implicated in war crimes in the east. If they were the devil's generals, they were bought with Satan's gold.



"It was nothing to do with me."

After the fall of Berlin, Germany's surviving commanders were interrogated and some were tried for war crimes. When they claimed to know nothing of the atrocities in eastern Europe or the Holocaust, many British and American generals instinctively believed them, accepting their former opponents at face value: professional experts who had done their best. The German generals boasted of their apolitical tradition; it was not for them to question the orders of the government. In any case, in August 1933 the whole Wehrmacht had sworn an oath to Germany's new Führer Adolf Hitler. And you couldn't ask a gentleman to break his word.

Even when German generals were arraigned on serious charges, the argument that the SS – and only the SS – had committed war crimes had

already been accepted by a significant body of western opinion. Field Marshal von Manstein's defence was assisted by lawyers paid for by British officers. General Guderian discovered a hitherto unknown passion for the works of influential British historian Basil Liddell-Hart, who would shortly claim credit for the whole Blitzkrieg concept. And within a few years, the need to incorporate West Germany into NATO, to rebuild a German army capable of fighting the Russians, commanders of Manstein's undoubted ability could not be allowed to languish in jail. Sentenced to 18 years for his actions in Russia, he was released within three to help construct the Bundeswehr. The idea that the generals had fought only for the greater good of Germany became a necessary fiction for post-war Germany.

Below: There were no clean hands in the eastern race war. SS and Wehrmacht alike were brutalised by the escalation of violence in the conflict. Prisoners not shot out of hand were to be murdered in the Reich.



Above: As the war progressed, Partisan activity in the occupied east grew ever more effective. Civilians remotely suspected of guerilla activity were summarily slaughtered. The Wehrmacht needed little encouragement to implement the Führer's directives on such matters.

Below: Wilhelm Keitel keeps his chin up upon signing the surrender document on 9 May 1945. Although he had little real authority, he was the perfect scapegoat for the German generals. At Nuremberg he was hanged for conniving at the worst of the Wehrmacht's atrocities.





INTO THE GHETTO

The ghettos of World War II differed from all previous Jewish quarters in history. A key part of the 'Final Solution', they were gathering points for people whose next stop was the gas chamber.

Ghettoes have been around for a long time. Jews were often forced to live in a designated quarter of medieval towns and cities, and the name ghetto comes from the 16th Century Jewish quarter of Venice – *Geto Nuovo*, or 'New Foundry'. But the ghettos established by the Nazis in Eastern Europe were different.

In September 1939, the Wehrmacht conquered the western half of Poland, and large areas of the country were incorporated into the Reich. The conquest of Poland brought two thirds of the three million Polish Jews under Nazi control. Most of the Jews lived in the major cities of Warsaw, Lodz, Krakow, Lublin and Lvov, but there were smaller communities in towns and villages all over Poland.

One of the primary reasons that Adolf Hitler went to war was to provide *Lebensraum* – living

space – for the German people. Some could be obtained by the expansion of the Reich into Germanic areas of other countries, such as Austria and the Sudetenland, but the bulk of the new territory would have to be taken from other peoples. And if those peoples were what Hitler and the Nazis considered the arch 'race enemy', so much the better.

The problem with snatching property and resources from 'sub-human' Slavs and Jews was what to do with the people that pure Germans displaced?

THE FIRST GHETTOES

By the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Poland was divided into 10 districts. Western districts were annexed into greater Germany, eastern districts became part of the USSR, and what remained in the centre became a German colony which was known as the *Generalgouvernement*. Jews living in what was now Germany

Warsaw, 1941. Hunger and disease are taking their toll of the packed population in the ghetto. This elderly Jew, starving and suffering from the first stages of typhus, has collapsed in the street. His fellows will do what they can, but his life expectancy can be numbered in days.

would have to be moved: under the leadership of Hans Frank, the *Generalgouvernement* was to become the destination of most of them.

The first ghetto was set up at Piotrkowski Trybunalski south of Lodz in October 1939. This was followed by larger sites at Lodz, Warsaw, Lublin and Radom.

The invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 soon brought even more Jews into the expanding German empire. The populations of major cities like Kovno (Kaunas) in Lithuania and Minsk in Byelorussia were at least a third Jewish. These too were forced from their homes and into ghettos – though hundreds of thousands did not reach that far, victims of the murderous pogrom carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen*. By the end of 1942, all Jews in German-occupied eastern Europe were in ghettos, in hiding – or dead.

Between 350 and 400 ghettos were established in Poland, the

THE HOLOCAUST



Above: The children of the ghetto suffered more than most. Even with the natural human instinct to protect the young, infant mortality was high: there was simply too little food, care, fuel and shelter to spare and thousands were to die. Even so, the ghetto inmates did their best for the youngsters: although officially banned by the Germans, clandestine schools were set up to provide a bare minimum of education.

Baltic states, occupied Russia and Hungary. They varied considerably in size: the smallest might house 3,000 people; the largest, in Warsaw, had a maximum population approaching half a million. The smaller ghettos generally did not exist for long: their inhabitants were usually from the immediate locale and from neighbouring villages, and the ghettos were primarily staging posts for Jews on their way to the larger locations.

GHETTO STRUCTURE

Early ghettos were generally open. Poles could get into the ghetto, and Jews could get out. But Hans Frank's decision that all Jews should wear a yellow Star of David meant that they were easy to identify: any found outside the ghetto without good reason was liable to punishment, and those who did not wear their stars might be executed.

Most of the larger ghettos

Above right: One of the gates in the barbed-wire fence which surrounded the Lodz ghetto. The sign says 'Jewish residential area: entry forbidden.'

Right: Orthodox Jews in Lublin are mocked by stick-wielding German soldiers and SS guards. Humiliation like this was a daily event: any Jew who objected could expect a savage beating at the very least.

were closed. Warsaw was surrounded by 15 kilometres of wall; Lodz was sealed off by wooden fences and barbed wire. Theresienstadt in Bohemia, established by the SS as a 'showcase' Jewish community, was set up within the walls of an old fortified town.

The Germans had little to do with the actual running of the ghettos. They simply dumped the Jews into a restricted area (after relieving many of them of their personal valuables), set up a security perimeter with SS guards on walls, in guard towers and on the gates.

Organisation of the ghetto was usually left to a *Judenrat* – a council of elders responsible to the Nazis. They had an impossible task: to represent the Jewish population to the German authorities with whom they had no influence, and at the same time passing on the German decrees and demands to their desperate people. Although some



historians have accused the *Judenrats* of collaborating with their own executioners, they had little choice. Refusal to pass on the German demands meant arrest and almost certain death. Instead, they tried to soften the impact of Nazi horror by using the tools of the oppressed through history: using their wits to circumvent orders, obeying those orders with apparent willingness but in fact doing everything possible to slow them down.

The primary function of the *Judenrat* was internal administration. Although few Eastern European Jews had experience of such matters, they

WOHNGBIET DER
JUDEN
BETREten
VERBOTEN

had to set up police and postal systems. They had to provide workers for Nazi slave-labour projects, and were responsible for health, welfare and food distribution.

CONDITIONS

Conditions in the ghettos were appalling. Overcrowded – the Warsaw ghetto housed almost a third of the city's 1.5 million population in about two per cent of the available space – they were also squalid, filthy and had poor or no sanitation. Food was in short supply from the beginning. *Reichskommisar Lohse*, whose area of responsibility included the ghetto

THE HOLOCAUST



Above: September 1939, Polish Jews are forced to sweep the streets after being rounded up by German soldiers and einsatzkommandos. Soon they will be forced into ghettos, and within three years most will have been slaughtered in the death camps.

Below: A street scene in the Warsaw ghetto early in 1943. Only 55,000 Jews remained: over 300,000 had been shipped to the Treblinka death camp between July and September of the previous year.



Below: Women and children wait to be deported after the Warsaw ghetto erupted in April 1943. SS reaction to the rising was brutal: 7,000 Jews were shot, 7,000 sent to Treblinka to be gassed, and 15,000 were sent to the ghetto at Lublin. The Warsaw ghetto was destroyed.



of Kovno in Lithuania, issued a directive which included the statement: "Jews in the ghettos will receive only as much food as the rest of the population can spare, but no more than is required for bare subsistence. The same goes for other essential goods." The Nazi idea of 'bare subsistence' was a diet offering as little as 200 calories per day.

Filth, overcrowding and lack of shelter meant that the ghettos were breeding grounds for diseases like typhus. Already suffering from malnutrition, disease struck at those least able to resist: the young, the old, the sick. About one in five of the populations of the Warsaw and Lodz ghettos died in 1941 and 1942 – about 120,000 people. Although there is no evidence that the Nazis used starvation as a deliberate means of destroying Jews, it is also clear that they had no qualms about large numbers starving to death.

GHETTO LIFE

According to Israel Gutman, a survivor of the Warsaw ghetto, "the closed ghetto cut the Jews off completely from the rest of the world. It prevented Jews from making contact with non-Jews, and left them isolated, insulated and in a state of choking congestion."

Life in the ghetto was a constant battle for survival. The basic necessities had to be fought for: food, shelter, clothing – especially in the bitter central European winters.

But life went on. Families adjusted to the daily humiliations, the fear of deportation. Children continued to be educated, and many of the ghettos developed a rich cultural life. Among the inhabitants were people who before the war had been noted actors, singers, poets and artists, as well as scientists and university lecturers. At Terezin, intellectuals speaking in attics and cellars lectured enthusiastic audiences on topics ranging from the 'Sociological structure of Jews in the Diaspora' and 'Cicero's speeches against

Cataline' to the 'Theory of Relativity' and 'The Artistic Experience'.

Another rich vein in the cultural life of the ghettos was religion. Banned from practicing their faith by the Germans, many of the ghetto residents rediscovered belief. Religious services and instruction were held in secret, and Jewish holy days were observed as far as was possible.

TRANSIT CAMPS

To the Nazis, the ghettos were never more than an interim solution to the Jewish problem. The 'Madagascar Plan' was contemplated in 1940, but deporting all of Europe's Jews to the large Indian Ocean island was never remotely feasible. Instead, they came up with the 'Final Solution'.

After the Wansee Conference in January 1942, mass murder became the official policy. Soon afterwards, the SS began to liquidate the ghettos.

In his history of the extermination camps, Yitzhak Arad discussed the process. "Organising the deportation of the 2,284,000 Jews which SS records indicated were living in *Generalgouvernement* ghettos alone called for careful planning. The geographical dispersion of the ghettos, the location and killing capacities of the death camps, the available means of transport would all have to be considered."

Whole populations were transported to the death camps of Sobibor, Treblinka and Belzec, and by the beginning of 1944 most of the empty ghettos were razed to the ground.

In 1944 the 'Final Solution' was being applied to Jews outside Poland: Hungarian Jews were being transported to Auschwitz, and the ghetto at Terezin was being used as a transit camp for western European Jews who were destined for the same fate. By the time the Red Army liberated the ghettos of eastern Europe, not one was still standing.

GHETTOES IN OCCUPIED EUROPE

There is some evidence Hitler and the Nazis already had it in mind to eliminate Europe's Jews before the war started, but for the moment they were content to move them off their land, confiscate their property and concentrate them into ghettos. To that end, SD chief Reinhard Heydrich sent a memo to selected SS chiefs even before the fall of Warsaw.

*Secret
Berlin: September 21 1939
To the Chiefs of Einsatzgruppen*

The Jewish Question in occupied territories

I refer to the conference held in Berlin today, and repeat that the planned measures (i.e. the final aim) are to be kept secret.

We must distinguish between the final aim (which will require a long time to complete) and the stages leading to the fulfilment of that aim, which will be carried out quickly.

For the moment, the initial

steps towards the final aim is to concentrate Jews from the countryside and smaller towns into selected areas of the larger cities. This concentration is to be completed as soon as possible.

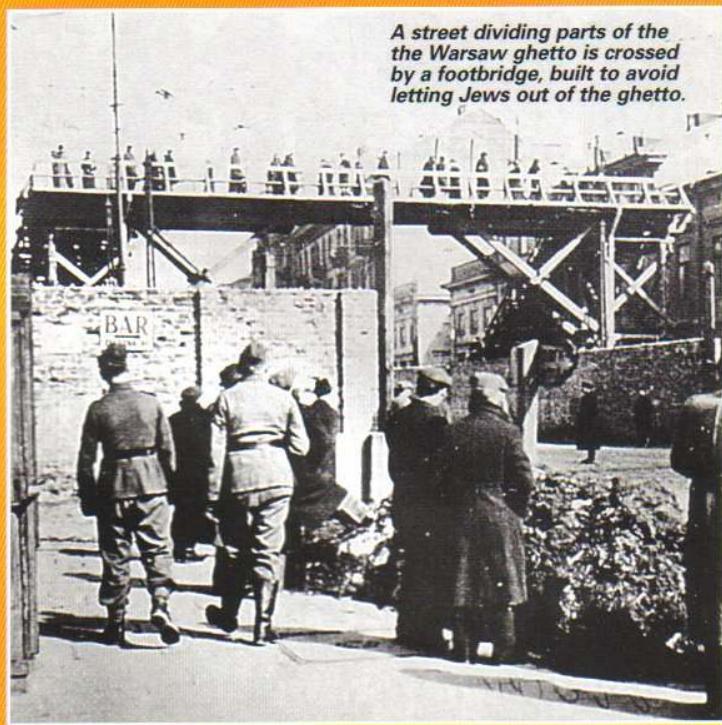
In each existing community, a council of Jewish elders is to be established. These are to be informed of dates and times of movements to the cities. They are to be held personally responsible for the departure of all Jews in their community to the cities.

For security reasons, it will be necessary to bar Jews from certain sections of the city: alternatively, they may be forbidden from leaving the ghetto.

Heydrich

Heydrich's memo was acted on quickly, and the first ghetto was established in Poland late in 1939. By the summer of 1942 more than three million Jews were confined to ghettos in eastern Europe and German-occupied parts of the USSR.

A street dividing parts of the Warsaw ghetto is crossed by a footbridge, built to avoid letting Jews out of the ghetto.



Major Ghettos Eastern Europe 1942-1944





GERMANY REARMS

1918 was intended to mark the end of German expansion in mainland Europe. But it had the opposite effect: Hitler used Germany's shame to gain power, and only a generation later her revitalised army was pouring into neighbouring countries.

German training tanks put on a display of force. Such propaganda triumphs wooed Germans and fooled foreign observers. So unprepared was Germany for a war that these Panzer 1s were actually deployed in the early Blitzkrieg campaigns.





Left: The charismatic von Seeckt took on the demoralised and disorderly remnants of the Imperial Army. Keeping it clear of political bias he restored the Reichswehr's stability and order.

military weapon. This was due to the training of its career soldiers as the nucleus of a later field army. Because it was prohibited offensive weapons such as tanks, poison gas, aeroplanes and U-Boats, the Reichswehr had to do its development work abroad, primarily in the USSR with the full cooperation of the Red Army.

The Reichswehr was predominantly composed of former members of the Imperial Army and Navy, and as such was highly anti-republican in nature. Hitler openly courted this significant power base. Within three days of achieving the Chancellorship, he announced plans to the Reichswehr generals for the rearming of Germany.

SECRET LUFTWAFFE

It has frequently been said that The Luftwaffe was spirited out of nothing. This is not entirely true. During the Weimar years, a small air presence had been kept alive within the *Reichsheer* and *Reichsmarine*. Von Seeckt, responsible for the development of the army, had always had a keen interest in the retention of the air arm and about 180 flying officers had been taken into the *Reichsheer* at its inception. In 1923, 100 Fokker D XIII fighters were secretly bought from Holland. These were then crated to Russia, to the secret German flying school at Lipetsk. In all, 130 fighter pilots and 80 air observers were trained there between 1925 and 1933.

The German air industry was encouraged to keep alive its warplane trials and development and to transfer some of its production abroad. The decentralised nature of aircraft development dates from this time, and was to contribute to a crippling waste of resources under the Third Reich, with numerous aircraft companies vying with each other for Luftwaffe contracts.

THE VERSAILLES Treaty was signed on 28 June 1919. It was designed by the Great Powers to emasculate Germany. It enervated her through crippling war reparations, and limited her armed forces to a strength insufficient even to guarantee the integrity of her borders. As Germany had not even been allowed to participate in the negotiations, the treaty was rejected most Germans as a 'dictated peace'. The onerous terms ensured a foothold for anti-democratic forces, not the least of which was the NSDAP.

For a proud nation with a strong military tradition the treaty was insulting, its measures draconian. The armed forces of Germany were to be limited to a 100,000 man army, with 15,000 career men in the navy. The Air Force and Naval Air Force were disbanded. The production and acquisition of heavy weapons such as tanks and aeroplanes was prohibited.

WEIMAR REVISIONISM

From the outset, the Weimar government attempted to lessen the harshest terms, though this revisionist policy had little success. As a result, Weimar embarked upon a policy of secretly expanding its forces. Even limited to 100,000 men the Reichswehr was a significant

Secret Army

Weimar-Soviet cooperation

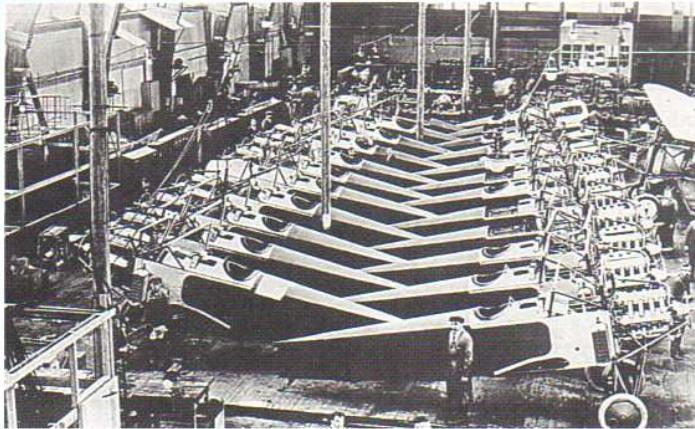
THE GERMAN failure to keep pace with the reparation payments demanded in the Versailles Treaty led to the French invasion of the Ruhr in 1923. As a consequence von Seeckt, the charismatic leader of the Reichswehr, advocated a *rapprochement* with Communist Russia. The beleaguered German government concluded the Rapallo Treaty with the Soviet Union in 1923.

The immediate objective of the *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union was to neutralise the threat to Germany's border areas. This led, with the German chancellor's support, to the funnelling of German defence funds into Russia.

There was restricted purchase and development of some Russian manufactured armaments. Later, a chemical warfare installation and a tank

and air training school were established in Russia for German use. These measures were strictly prohibited by the Versailles Treaty terms and by German law. The cooperation continued until the end of the Weimar government.

Von Seeckt's towering reputation is partly based on his enthusiasm for the creation and development of mobile warfare, and historians cite the development of tank tactics in the Soviet schools. But his support for using aircraft and armoured cars in reconnaissance, and the backing he gave to tanks as a supporting arm were simply agreement with concepts that had been accepted since WWI. In truth, Seeckt had not progressed beyond von Schlieffen's idea of cavalry and hard-marching infantry, backed by the use of railways.



Above: A factory in Amsterdam completes the illegal German order for 100 Fokker D XIII fighters which were then shipped to Russia. Arms manufacturers did not feel themselves bound by the Treaty.

Below: German and Russian airmen confer at Lipetsk. Both the Soviets and the defeated Germany were regarded as pariahs by the triumphant western powers, so forcing an accommodation between the outcasts.





Denied an armoured corps by the Versailles Treaty, Germany had to invent other means to develop their Panzer tactics. Here cavalry soldiers stand in front of mock-up tanks – a conventional car chassis with a plywood superstructure.

Gliding was also sponsored as a sport inside Germany by the Reichswehr. It was a sport which attracted not only youth, but serving and former officers as well. There was also the civil air transport ministry (RVM), which at von Seeckt's request was chaired by a former war pilot – Brandenburg. He developed the civil air transport with an eye to future military requirements. In addition the RVM provided funding for the other clandestine air activities. Lufthansa, the national airline formed out of a merger between Aero-Lloyd and Junkers, provided a further source of military pilots, technical aircraft staff and personnel.

The Imperial German Navy, blockaded in northern waters during WWI, achieved its finest hour on 21 June 1919. The bulk of the High Seas Fleet was scuttled at the Royal Navy's base of Scapa Flow, where it had been interned the previous year. Naval commanders after 1919 were keen to raise the navy phoenix-like from the ashes, even though all the Western powers had allowed Germany to keep was a couple of

ancient pre-dreadnoughts. In the '20s and '30s the navy, in common with other fighting arms, were decidedly expansionist, although paying lip service to the terms of the Treaty. Even this pretence was thrown aside in 1928, with the decision to build a fleet of pocket battleships. These vessels were to be fast, well-armoured and capable of long-duration cruises. They would be ideal for surface raiding. But the navy was still minute when Hitler came to power.

AMBITIOUS PLANS

Such was the state of German arms in 1933 when Germany elected its new Chancellor. Part of Hitler's appeal to the electorate was his insistence in restoring Germany's faith in itself, and to actively remove the humiliation of Versailles. By the summer of 1934 Hitler had secured his power base with the taming of the para-military SA. He now set about the realisation of his political and foreign policy, governed by the twin obsessions of *Lebensraum* and the irresistible resurgence of the Aryan nation. As Hitler had

written in 'Mein Kampf' "Germany will become a world power or not exist at all."

Externally, the progress of rearming was dependent upon the attitude of the Great Powers towards the Nazi regime. As Hitler expected a vigorous reaction from the French he moved cautiously at first. He sought to reassure the powers of his peaceful intentions. Europeans did not wish to witness another major war, and chose to believe the Führer. In any case, the European powers did not have the willpower to halt the dictator's ambitions even by a local show of force.

Furthermore, Britain, Italy and the USA thought it intolerable for Germany to remain disarmed, while other countries, France in particular, refused to reduce their forces. Britain was not an immediate neighbour of Germany of course, and remained complacent due to her vast navy and geographical position.

With the tacit consent of the powers, Hitler was able to take Germany out of the Disarmament Conference and The League of Nations in October 1933. By the

spring of 1934, when France precipitately broke off further disarmament negotiations, it was clear that Hitler's fears of France had been grossly exaggerated and that rearmament could proceed securely.

VERSAILLES REVOKED

1935 was the year that Hitler had the courage to take the rearmament nettle in both hands. On 8 March, in one of his famous Saturday surprises, he announced that Germany had established an air force. So secret had the preparations been that the Luftwaffe already numbered some 1,888 aircraft of all types, together with a personnel of 20,000. This served as a dry run for his next proclamation on 16 March – the reinstatement of universal military service and the expansion of the army to 36 divisions with a numerical strength of 500,000. In Berlin, to the cheers of thousands of spectators, Hitler held a review of the army along the avenue *Unter den Linden*.

Over the next four years, the arms build-up continued apace. The army's strength reached 52 divisions by 1939, including five



The Diktat

Too bitter a pill

SIGNED ON 28 June 1919, by Germany's opponents in the First World War, the Treaty was engineered to end forever the German military threat in Europe. The terms of the peace were imposed at gun-point and were designed to humiliate a proud nation. They did much to sow the seeds of future conflict.

The most important terms of the 440 Articles to which Hitler addressed his revisionist programme were – *German territorial losses*: Germany had to cede Alsace-Lorraine to France; Posen and West Prussia to Poland; the territory of Hultschin to Czechoslovakia; the Memel territory to the Allies; Danzig, and all its overseas colonies. On the basis of plebiscites, Germany had to cede eastern Upper Silesia to Poland; Eupen-Malmedy to Belgium; and northern Schleswig to Denmark. In addition the Saarland was placed under the administration of the League of Nations; the Elbe, Oder, Memel, Danube, Rhine, and Mosel rivers were internationalised; and Austria was forbidden to unify with the German Reich. The total German losses were about 29,600 sq miles and some 7.3 million inhabitants.

Military stipulations: Universal military service was abolished; the German army was limited to a maximum of 100,000, and the navy to 15,000, career men; the air force and naval air force were disbanded; the production and use of heavy weapons such as aeroplanes and tanks was prohibited; German war material and the control of German arms production were to be surrendered to the Allies and the German General Staff and the German military schools were to be dissolved.

Economic stipulations: Germany was obliged to pay reparations and to supply goods (including coal, machinery, factory installations and underwater cable) and livestock (for example, 140,000 dairy cows) to the Allies; Germany had to surrender nearly its entire merchant fleet; German assets abroad (including private

assets) were to be confiscated. The imposition of reparations was justified by the assignment to Germany and its allies of sole responsibility for the war, as stated in Article 231, and Germany was forced to acknowledge it.

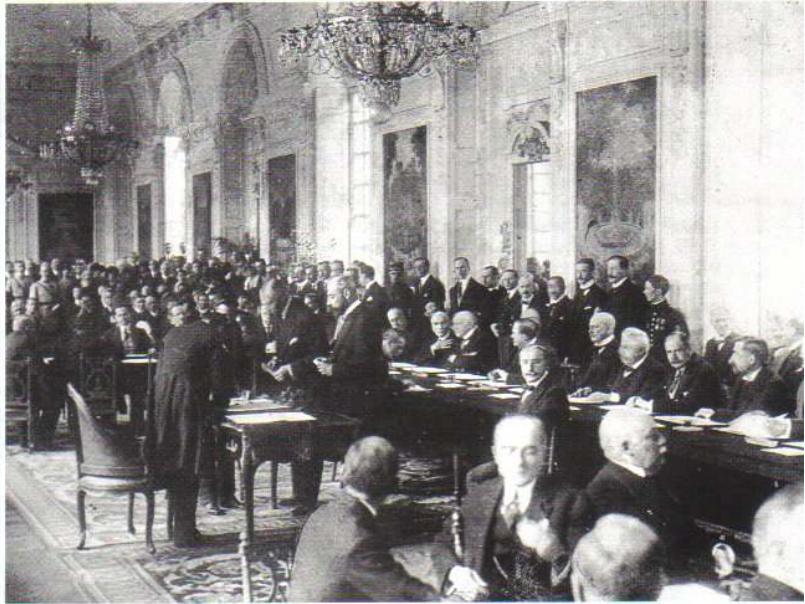
Lastly the former German emperor, Wilhelm II, and other persons alleged to have violated international law, were to be indicted before a future court of law and handed over to it.

The Versailles Treaty was almost unanimously rejected in Germany as a dictated peace and constituted a heavy and lasting liability for the Weimar republic. Among the Allies as well, the Treaty did not meet with universal approval. The United States, for example, did not ratify it, and in 1921 concluded a separate peace treaty with Germany.

Right: German diplomats attempt a display of dignity with a gun pointed to their heads. The delegates acquiesced to the dictated terms, but they had to: failure to sign would have meant the re-opening of hostilities.

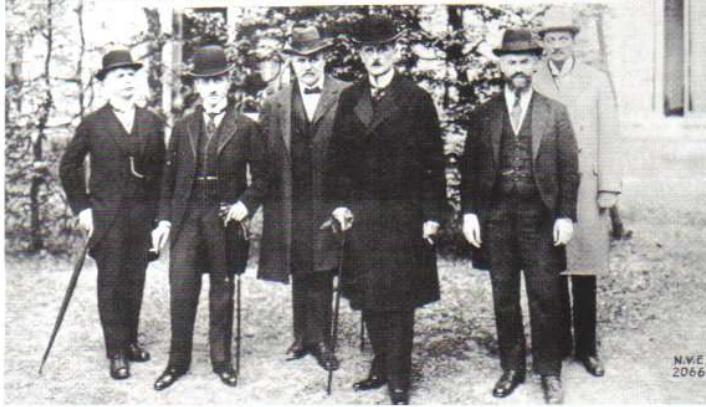
Below: The High Seas Fleet was interned at the British Home Fleet's base of Scapa Flow. On 21 June 1919, Vice-Admiral Ludwig von Reuter, believing that "the honour of the navy" had to be saved, ordered its scuttling. The Allies simply demanded that more warships be delivered. This left the Reichsmarine was left with a tiny core of obsolete craft.

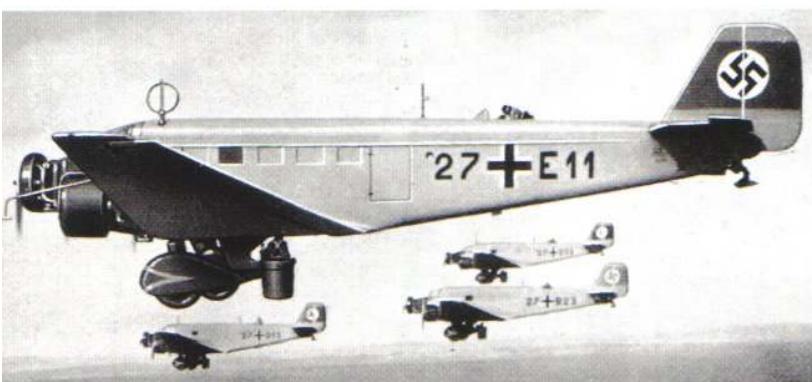
Below: In the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles the humiliation of Germany is engineered. The western powers wanted to plunder a defeated Germany, rather than broker a liberal humane settlement.



Aus Versailles.

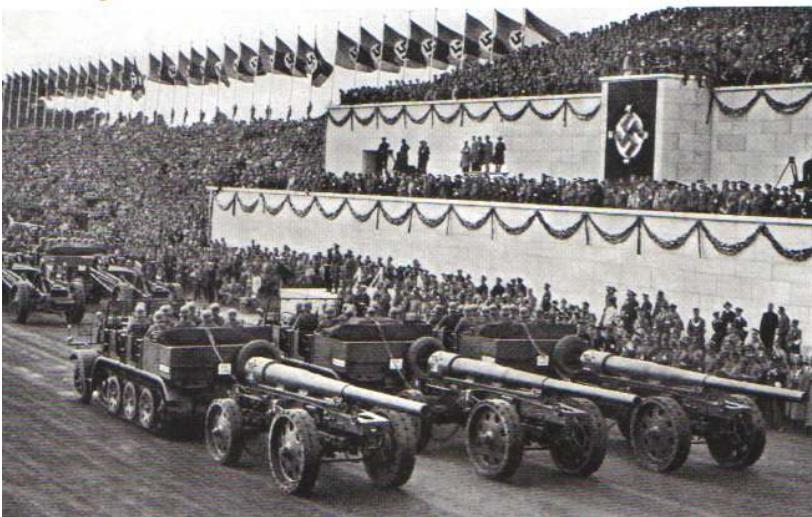
Die deutschen Unterhändler. Von links nach rechts: Leinert, Melchior, Giesberts, Brockdorff-Rantza, Landsberg, Schücking.





Above: The Luftwaffe was officially reborn by order of the Führer in 1935, but development of new military aircraft had started covertly long before. The Junkers 52 (shown here in its bomber guise) was a typical example of an aircraft that had been purposely developed to fulfil a civil, and when the time arose, military role.

Below: In September 1935, for the first time, a day of the annual Party meeting at Nuremberg was given over to the army. Pride of place was given to the motorised formations, then still in their infancy.



Below: The Kriegsmarine was the poor relation of the German armed forces. Hitler saw no immediate need for a large navy as he had a strong aversion to taking on the British Empire. As a result, the first U-boats were designed for coastal defence only.



Panzer divisions. By the time of mobilisation in August, a further 52 divisions had been added. Energetic development of modern aircraft types proceeded apace, and the Luftwaffe certainly enjoyed a technical if not numerical superiority at the outbreak of war. Further, it had a cadre of pilots with real combat experience gained in the Spanish Civil War.

NEGLECTED SERVICE

The Führer's attitude to the navy was succinctly expressed in 1936. "The Navy," he asked, "what need have we of that? I cannot conceive of a European war which will hang in the balance because of a few ships." Hitler knew that to be a world power, Germany would need a fleet in the future, but his immediate aims did not call for challenging the world's great navies on the high seas. Furthermore, Admiral Raeder, the commander of the Kriegsmarine was not the man to embark on an aggressive expansionist policy. Calm and deliberate, he concentrated on training and building up the infrastructure of the fleet.

Nevertheless, as part of the massive rearmaments programme in the 1930s, Hitler sponsored the development of the now famous 'Z plan'. The scheme to build a massive surface and underwater fleet of very modern design was due for completion in 1944. But until then the Kriegsmarine could only hope to bite at the heels of the Allies' fleets in any coming conflict.

Rearmament posed serious economic problems for Germany. This was due to her heavy reliance upon the import of food and raw materials. Once the slack in the economy had been taken up, continued emphasis on rearmament led inexorably to a balance of payment crisis. Significantly, Hitler refused to tolerate any substantial fall in living standards for the sake of rearming. Dictatorships, more so than democratically elected leaders, are very sensitive to

public opinion – or what the secret police imagine such opinion to be. The Gestapo reported an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the Nazi leadership, which they feared might become overt if the economic situation worsened. This was probably false – peacetime conditions were never likely to return to the dire state that had existed during the depression, which was in everyone's recent memory.

Hitler also instinctively feared that long-term investment in the arms industry and the general disruption of the peacetime economy would endanger his personal rule by placing too much power in the hands of the industrialists.

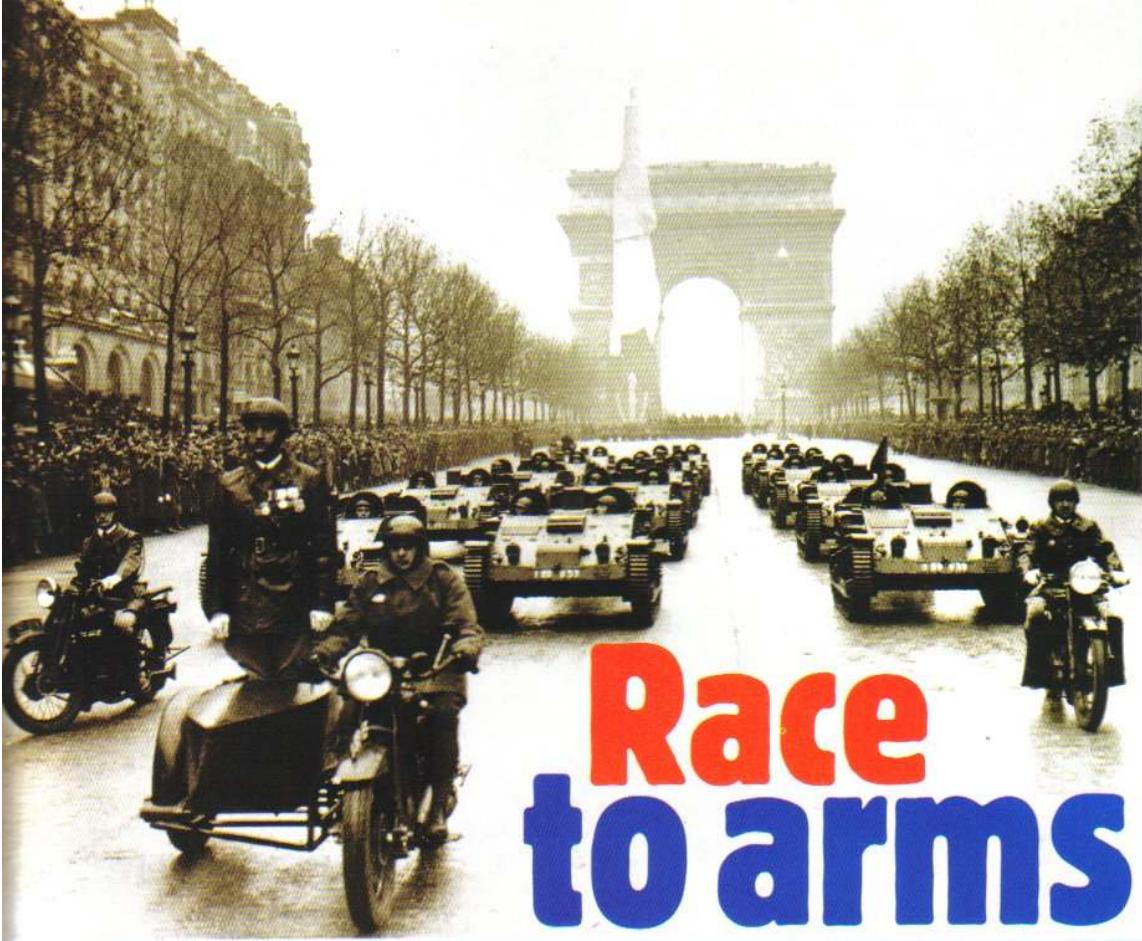
BREADTH NOT DEPTH

The alternative was to rearm in breadth only. By restricting war production to a limited sector of the economy it was possible to have guns and butter, with minimum dislocation to the economy. No undue strain was placed on the people and in addition Hitler was able to build up a sizeable army in the shortest possible time. Only in 1935 did arms expenditure rise noticeably, but this was from a very low baseline. Spending had doubled again by 1936. Surprisingly, in 1937 the military budget dropped slightly to no more than five per cent of German gross domestic product.

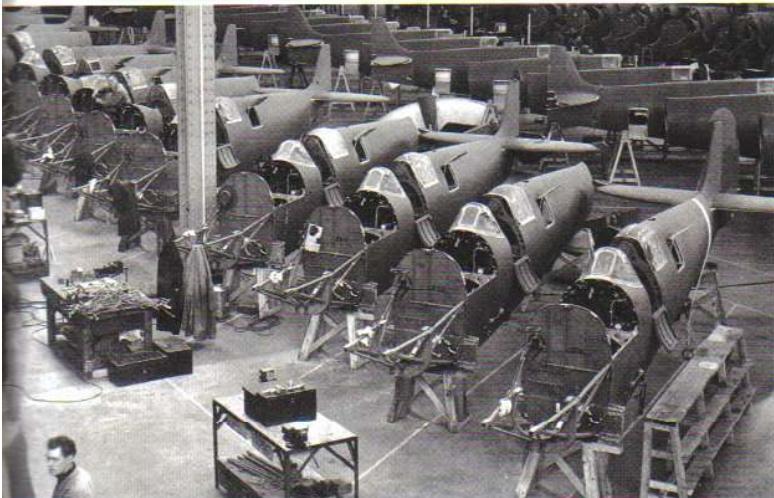
The Reich propaganda machine deliberately exaggerated the extent of rearmament. So effective was Goebbels's department that it was only apparent after the war how far Germany had been from total mobilisation in 1939.

The General Staff approved. A small army with a core of powerful motorised units trained in Blitzkrieg tactics could strike quickly and win decisive battles in a matter of days.

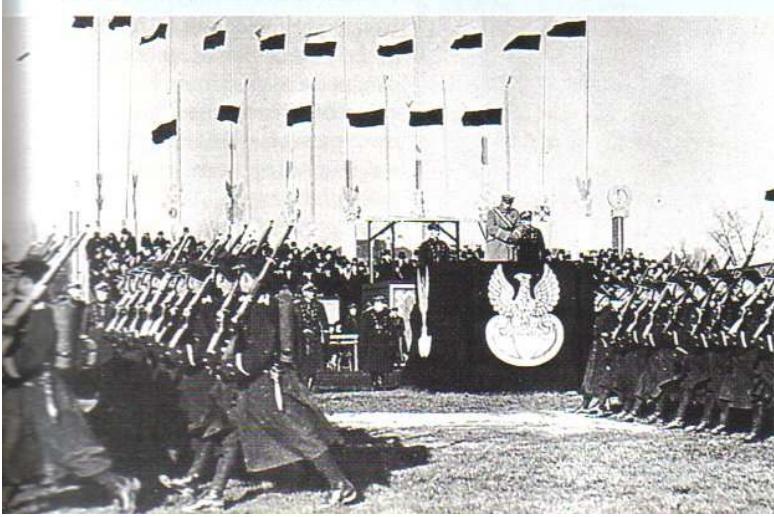
This was provided that Hitler could isolate his victims, and not be plunged into a long multi-front war. That, they thought, he could not possibly win.



Race to arms



Below: Poland's right-wing quasi-military government in the 1930s diverted considerable funds to the armed forces. In 1939 she could field an army of 2.5 million. But she had no tank corps to speak of and her aircraft were completely outclassed.



Above: Colonel Charles de Gaulle in 1934 wrote a book depicting the all-mechanised army of the future. The moribund French staff ignored him. In 1939 the French War Council stated, "no new type of warfare has been evolved since the termination of the Great War."

Left: In March 1936 the British Defence Requirements Committee ordered the development of a high-speed, single-seater fighter plane. Another two years were to pass before the Air Ministry could be persuaded to re-equip the RAF's obsolete fighter wings.

Below: The Italian experience in WWI had revealed the vanity of planning and the appalling cost of modern technological warfare. Fascism played the role of the Paper Tiger in the 1930s, and was assured an early exit from WWII.

The German economy was not geared on a war footing, even after the Czech crisis. However, the western powers had belatedly realised that German rearmament needed to be countered by more than words.

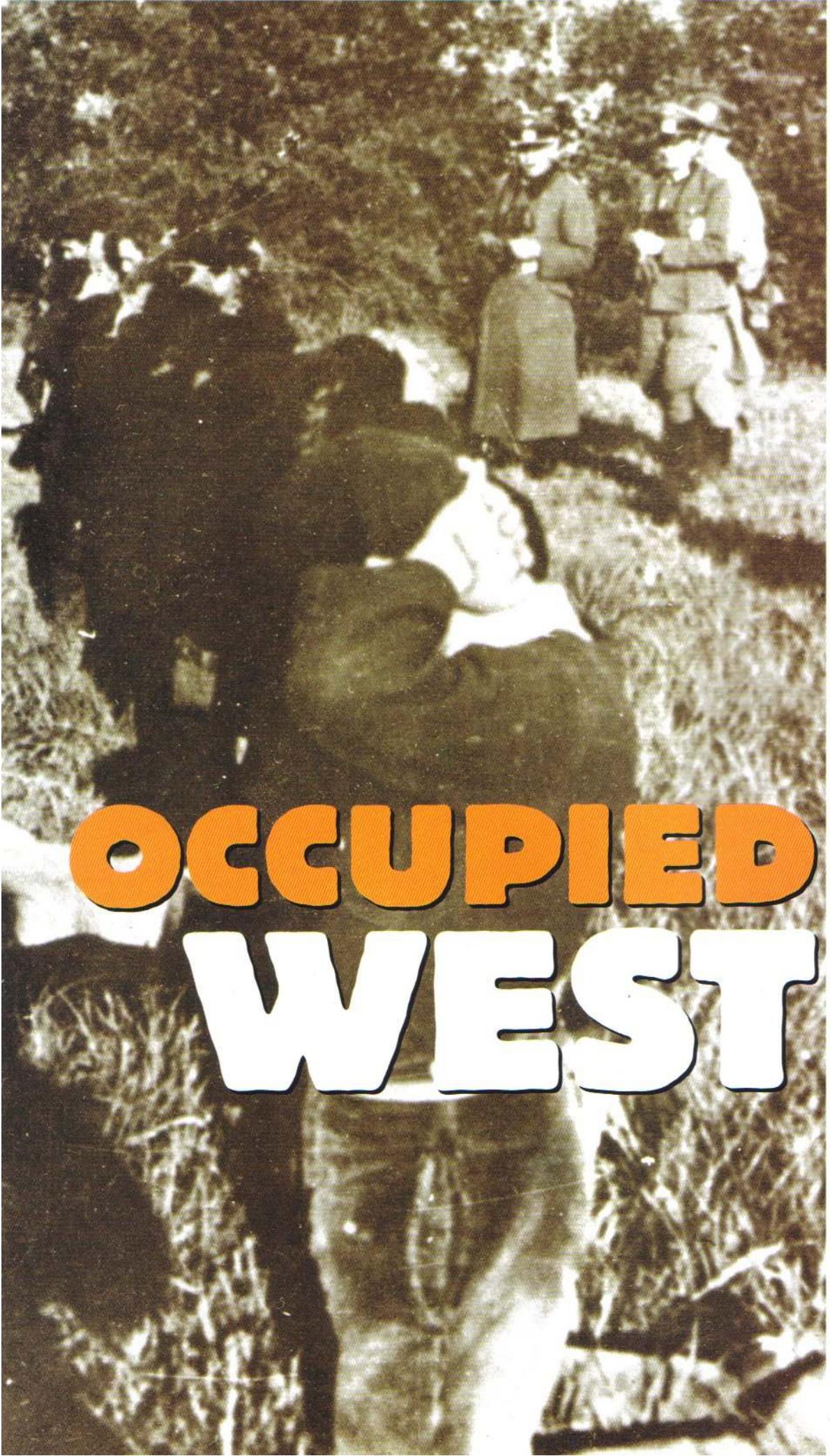
Britain had cut defence spending to the bone by 1931 following the world financial crisis. She perceived the main threat as coming from Japan, and to that end embarked upon an expansion on the High Seas. Although air defence was given priority in 1936, by the time of Münich in 1938 the RAF had only two squadrons of Spitfires and Hurricanes and had not deployed an effective radar screen.

France alone had decided that the next war would be fought like the last. She adopted a siege mentality, sheltering behind the defensive fortifications of the Maginot line. Although French military expenditure remained high, her army and air force were neither designed nor deployed for offensive capabilities.

The Soviets had contended that mass production rather than strategic brilliance would carry the day in future conflict. She had a large bomber force, but by 1939 her fighters were outdated and her extensive tank formations were assigned to the front line rather than to a mobile reserve.

Italy deserves little consideration. She lacked both an industrial economy and competent military leaders. Count Ciano, Mussolini's foreign minister was aware of the appalling state of Italian arms. He begged Il Duce not to side with Hitler in the coming war. The reluctance was also shared by the generals, who unfortunately failed to deflect their leader's martial ambitions.





OCCUPIED WEST

At first, German rule in western Europe was relatively benign. But the Nazi occupiers grew steadily crueler as resistance to the regime increased, and the threat of arrest and execution were felt by all.

THE LIBERATION of occupied Europe by the Allies started in 1944, but in some areas the unwelcome rule by the forces of the Third Reich lasted right up to the end of the war in 1945.

In many countries the police and civil service remained in place and kept the country running for their new masters. Right-wing pro-Nazi political parties existed in most countries and provided puppet national leaders for Berlin. Collaboration ranged from neutrality or tacit support to active assistance and even service in the German armed forces fighting in the USSR. For many young men and women the rapid military triumph of the German forces made the dynamic energy of their former enemies very attractive. Their own leaders had fled the country and Fascism appeared to be the force of the future.

Left: Condemned prisoners were commonly executed on the edge of the town. The bodies would then be dispersed secretly for burial around the area. Usually the places of interment would be quite inaccessible, to avoid the population going en masse to the graves of the martyrs.



Equally, however, resistance began almost as soon as the invading forces were in place. This included providing food or clothing for British soldiers who had evaded capture in 1940 and later aiding Allied air crew who had escaped from POW camps or parachuted from burning aircraft. A few resisters were more active, attacking or sabotaging military and industrial targets. These were precision attacks, sometimes against a single critical machine in a production line, and were often more effective than massive air raids by the Allies.

Attacks by the resistance often brought about cruel and arbitrary revenge on the population by the Germans. However, their conduct in Western Europe was generally more humane than in the East.

In 1940 the British were in no position to offer assistance, though over the following years a network of special operations and intelligence organisations came into being. These made extensive use of Free French personnel who had escaped to Britain in 1940.

But not all of the resistance looked to London. Following the invasion of the USSR, Communist parties in the occupied countries mobilised their cells to form resistance groups. In some areas differences between London-based resistance groups and those that looked to Moscow for their lead produced tension and hostility that undermined their efficiency in the field.

FRANCE

The largest country to be occupied was France. Following the Armistice of June 1940 Germany and Italy took large areas of the country under direct control. In addition to occupying most of the north and west, the Germans annexed outright Alsace-Lorraine. Future plans included extending the German border westwards to include an area with a north-south line from Mezières, through St-Dizier to



Above: Daily life continued unremarkably during the occupation. But peace of mind was unobtainable. There was always the threat of the 'knock at the door', the rounding-up of hostages, the deportation for slave labour. The widespread use of slave labour for projects around the Reich from 1942 led to a massive increase in Resistance numbers.

Below: Hostages were taken in response to acts of sabotage. If a German was shot it was settled policy throughout Occupied Europe that hostages should be shot at the ratio of up to one hundred to one. Hostages were usually those whose absence would be felt – doctors, community leaders, university professors, men of letters and lawyers.



NAZI HORRORS



Chaumont. The ultimate aim was to remove the French population and replace them with Germans.

The Occupied Zone in France resembled an inverted letter L. It included Paris, the industrial north with its coal mines, and the coast from the Channel down to

the Bay of Biscay. Control of French naval and air bases gave the Germans much better opportunities to wage sea and air attacks on Britain. They declared a 10-km-deep *zone interdite* inland from the coast, designed to prevent French citizens from

observing the Atlantic Wall defences under construction.

Part of France remained unoccupied – for a while. The *zone libre*, or free zone, was administered by Marshal Petain's right-wing collaborationist government. Based in the spa

town of Vichy it included the cities of Limoges, Toulouse and Lyons. This area was finally occupied by the Germans in November 1942.

The Vichy government at least had some measure of independence. However, in the occupied zone of Paris the collaborationist groups run by Jacques Doriot of the *Parti populaire Française* and Marcel Déat of the *Rassemblement national populaire* were opposed by the Vichy government. The 3,000 Frenchmen who fought with the Germans on the Eastern Front in the *Legion des Volontaires Française contre le Bolchevism* were later transferred into the Waffen-SS as part of the *Charlemagne* Division.

Eighty-three thousand Jews were deported from France and murdered, but in 1944 200,000 were still alive, many sheltered by fellow French citizens. The total war-related civilian losses in France during World War II were 250,000.

Off the northwest coast of France, the British-administered Channel Islands were occupied by the Germans from June 1940 to May 1945. The islands became fortresses: the residents of Alderney were removed and the island became the site of an SS-administered concentration camp with 1,000 French Jews working on the defences. There were sporadic acts of defiance, but no organised resistance. One of the reasons was the huge garrison – there were higher numbers of armed troops per square mile on the islands than in Nazi Germany itself. Between September 1942 and February 1943 the Germans deported about 2,200 islanders who were not native born. Of these, 46 died in internment camps or in transit and four women who were Jewish perished in extermination camps.

BELGIUM

Belgium was over-run by the Germans in two weeks in May 1940 and the King negotiated a surrender with the Germans on 28 May. He had hoped that



Above: Collaborators were always a soft target for the Resistance. In the Channel Islands their houses were daubed with the Swastika. The Germans retaliated by painting the symbol indiscriminately on hundreds of homes. Here two old women awake to find graffiti on their walls.

Below: As the war situation deteriorated the pace of executions quickened. Those carrying out the punishment could quickly become demoralised. One way of countering this was to have more than one rifleman to a victim. The executing party would be told that some of them had been issued with blanks.





Night and

Fog



Left: In every Gestapo prison in the cities of Occupied Europe the same tortures were committed. Breaking the body was turned into a science of creating the maximum pain for the least effort. The agony of the sufferers was etched into the walls.

Below: Some of those taken for interrogation would be shot in the underground cells. They would be spared the slow death in the concentration camps.

Above: Means of torture were progressively refined. But in the absence of psycho-active drugs traditional methods served the Gestapo well. Hanging a victim by his thumbs so that only his toes could scrape the ground for additional support caused dislocation and intense pain.

THE NACHT und Nebel decree was issued at Hitler's order on 17 December 1941 by Keitel, chief of the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW). It directed that in the Occupied Territories, persons who were charged with "punishable offences against the German Reich" were to be brought through "night and fog" to Germany, unless they had already received death sentences from military courts. The so-called NN prisoners were then tried by special courts. Upon acquittal or after serving time for their offences they would invariably be sent into the camp system - the favoured concentration camps were Natzweiler and Gross-Rosen. The prisoners were denied any contact with their families. Some 7,000 people were transported under the terms of the decree.

The decree replaced the unsuccessful Nazi policy of taking hostages to undermine underground activities. Suspected underground agents and others would now vanish without a trace 'into the night and fog.' If they were subsequently to die in the Reich, they were to be buried at their place of death. The location of the grave was not to be revealed.

The victims were mostly from France, Belgium and Holland.





following the surrender the country could become neutral and enjoy a degree of independence.

However, the country, along with the coalfields of northern France as far south as the Somme, was run as a military administration by General von Falkenhausen, who was based in Brussels. The frontier cantons of Eupen, Malmedy and St Vith, which had been transferred from Germany to Belgium in 1919, were reincorporated into the Reich by a special Führer decree on 18 May 1940. The Flemish nationalist VNV and the Francophone quasi-Fascist Rexist movement under Léon Degrelle collaborated with the Germans. The Belgians and Walloons formed the Waffen-SS divisions *Langemarck* and *Wallonien* that fought on the Eastern Front.

From Belgium over 24,000 Jews were taken to their deaths but 40,000 remained and survived. The total war-related civilian losses in Belgium during World War II (excluding Jews) were 10,000.

LUXEMBOURG

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, with a population of 293,000 and a defence force of 87, resisted the German invasion on 10 May 1940 and suffered seven casualties. The population were declared

German nationals and in August 1942 when 13,000 men were conscripted for military service there was a general strike. It was broken when 21 strikers were executed and hundreds sent to concentration camps. Altogether 2,848 Luxembourgers died in German uniform and 5,259 Luxembourgers lost their lives.

THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands, which had been neutral in World War I, had a small but poorly equipped army and was quickly over-run by the Germans. The Queen and government escaped to the United Kingdom. The *Reichskommissariat*, under two Austrians – Artur Seyss-Inquart and H. A. Rauter – administered the country as a dependent province of the Third Reich. It was a brutal rule in which the two men aimed to exploit all the resources of the Netherlands. Despite this, 54,000 Dutchmen were members of various Nazi organisations and 5,000 joined the Waffen-SS serving in the *SS Freiwilligen-Panzergradierdivision 'Nederland'* and in the *'Tandstorm Nederland'*. Holland was occupied for most of the war, and by the winter of 1944-45 starvation in the population was a major problem. During this period 16,000 people died from malnutrition.

The Jewish population of the Netherlands suffered cruelly. Only 20,000 survived the war. Some 106,000 were deported and murdered. Total war-related civilian losses in the Netherlands during World War II were 204,000.

DENMARK

In 1940 Denmark was the victim of the world's first operational parachute attack. The country was quickly occupied but until 29 August 1943 the King and country attempted to maintain an illusion of neutrality. The Germans brought increasing pressure on Denmark and while this produced 100,000 workers for German industry, Danes also served in the Waffen-SS Division *Nordland* on the Eastern Front. However, after 1943, following increased resistance including strikes and demonstrations, rule of the country was assumed by the Germans, through an unofficial board composed of the heads of the civil service under Nels Svenningsen.

In 1943 all sections of the population of Denmark collaborated in a daring operation in which 5,500 Danish Jews were smuggled to Sweden in one night just before the Germans began rounding them up. Only 472 were caught and deported to Theresienstadt and of these 52 eventually died.

NORWAY

Norway was attacked on 9 April 1940 and the fighting dragged on until 8 June, by which time the invasion of France and the Low Countries obliged the French and British forces to withdraw. King Haakon VII escaped to Britain and formed the basis for a government in exile. The leader of the Norwegian Fascist National Union Party was Vidkun Quisling. He was made Minister President by Josef Terboven, the Reich Commissioner for Norway, on 1 February 1942. Norwegian volunteers joined the Waffen-SS and made up the 5th SS-Panzerdivision 'Wiking' and the Waffen-SS Division 'Nordland' which fought on the Eastern Front.

About 40,000 Norwegians were imprisoned or sent to concentration camps, of whom about 2,000, including 700 Jews, died. A further 500 Norwegians were killed or executed for resistance activities. Total war-related civilian losses in Norway during World War II were 8,000.

ITALY

Italy entered the war as an Axis Pact ally of Germany but in September 1943 surrendered to the Allies and became a co-belligerent against Germany. The Allies had liberated Sicily and southern Italy by October 1943; however, the north remained under Fascist and German control until 1945. As in other countries in Western Europe there were collaborators and resisters within the community.

In the first year of their occupation of Western Europe the Germans were confident of final victory and conducted themselves arrogantly, but correctly. As the fortunes of war swung against them and resistance, both active and passive, increased, so their conduct and relations deteriorated.

Left: Justice for collaborators was swift and arbitrary. Many with a guilty conscience were the first to condemn. Particular scorn was reserved for perpetrators of 'horizontal' collaboration.





The Maquis

ON 18 JUNE 1940 Charles de Gaulle called upon the French to resist the German occupation of France. From disparate beginnings the Resistance developed into a regionally organised underground movement, which transcended party politics. It countered the occupation army in the Northern occupied zone, in Vichy France and in Algeria.

The Resistance was originally established by intellectuals, politicians and military men. Later on, people from all spheres of society became united in the struggle. On 27 May 1943, through his emissary, Jean Moulin,

de Gaulle achieved a merger of most resistance fighters in the *Conseil National de Résistance* (CNR). Moulin was tortured to death two months later by Klaus Barbie, Butcher of Lyons.

After liberation the CNR evolved into the French Home Army, with a fighting strength of about 15 divisions.

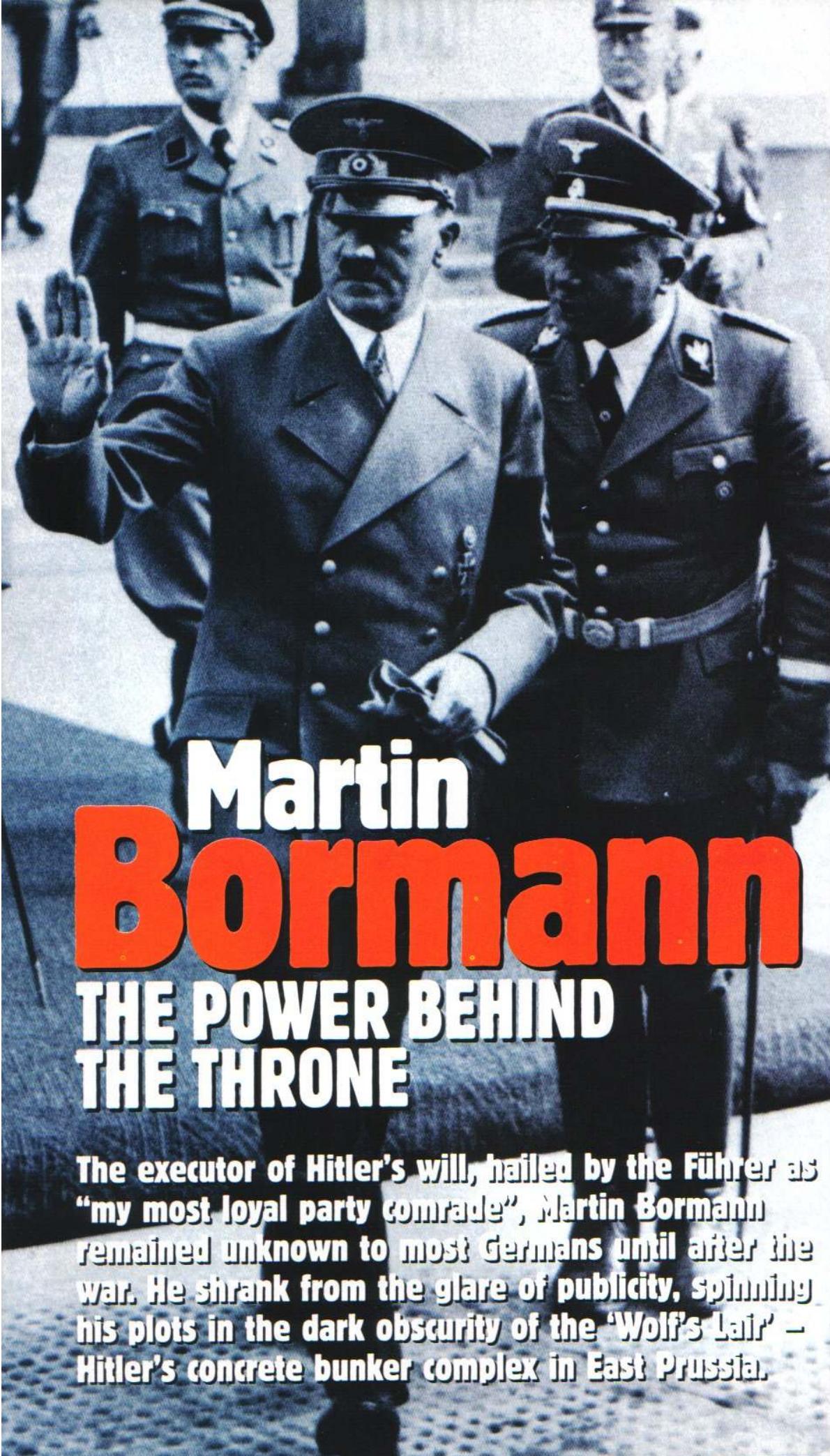
Estimates of the number of Resistance members who died vary considerably from 20,000 to 30,000. Some 75,000 others were also deported and did not survive the concentration camp system. Besides the German forces, police and French collaborators assisted in the executions.



Above: At Nuremberg the French prosecution read out an anonymous list of those taken as hostages and executed. In France alone this totalled 29,660. As the Germans retreated through France in the summer of 1944, reprisal massacres, such as that at Oradour-sur-Glane by the 'Das Reich' division, became commonplace.

Above left: De Gaulle's call-to-arms in 1940 initially attracted only a handful of citizens. The Resistance received a vital boost in June 1941 when the attack on the Soviet Union brought the French Communist party into active cooperation. It was further helped by the German decision to conscript French workers, many of whom took to the hills and joined guerrilla bands that adopted the name 'maquis' or undergrowth.

Left: Resistance operations included passive and more militant opposition. Some collected military intelligence for transmission to London; some organised escape routes for British airmen; others circulated anti-German leaflets and still others engaged in sabotage of railways and German installations. All of these actions assisted in tying down large German formations.



Martin Bormann

THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

The executor of Hitler's will, hailed by the Führer as "my most loyal party comrade", Martin Bormann remained unknown to most Germans until after the war. He shrank from the glare of publicity, spinning his plots in the dark obscurity of the 'Wolf's Lair' – Hitler's concrete bunker complex in East Prussia.



ARTIN BORMANN belonged to that key generation of Nazi leaders that just missed service in World War I.

Bormann's father Theodor was a former military musician who became a band leader. He toured widely before the turn of the century, even playing at seaside resorts on the English south coast. Joachim von Ribbentrop, the fastest social climber in the Third Reich, used to claim he'd seen Theodor Bormann on the conductor's stand, but this was a lie: Theodor joined the postal service while Ribbentrop was still a small child. Martin Bormann hardly knew the man either. He was born on 17 June 1900 and his father died just three years later.

It was a large family: he had an older step-sister and step-brother from his father's first marriage. His mother re-married within a few months of Martin's father's death and her new husband had five children by his previous marriage.

In later life Bormann claimed to have volunteered for the army as soon as he was old enough. But there is no evidence that he was anything other than an 18-year-old conscript when he joined the 55th Field Artillery Regiment in June 1918. Himmler joined the army at the same time and was made an officer cadet. The uneducated Bormann remained an enlisted man.

APPRENTICE FARMER

After demobilisation, Bormann found a job as an apprentice farmer with Hermann von Trauenfels. The former Colonel was an active member of the *Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei*, one of many right-wing groups of the time. Bormann impressed von Trauenfels: the Colonel could see that he was a born manager – bossy, attentive and blessed with an elephantine memory.

The paramilitaries went underground while Bormann was on the farm, and the estate



became an 'agricultural training association'. Discipline was arbitrary but often harsh. Twenty-three-year-old Walter Kadow was killed by his fellows when, having stolen money and run away, he foolishly returned to the area. One of the murderers was Rudolf Hess, the future commandant of Auschwitz, who was sentenced to 10 years for the crime. Bormann was involved, and went to prison for a year as an accessory. His defence was undertaken by one of Germany's top law firms – the expenses were met by the Mecklenburg Landowners' Association.

After his release Bormann fell out with von Trauenfels, probably over his wife. The aristocratic colonel was 46, his wife Ehrengard was 35 and Bormann was 25. The accusation was made by a Soviet journalist in the 1950s, but seems plausible given Bormann's later penchant for sexual adventure and the fact that Ehrengard stayed in touch with him until his death. He later named one of his daughters Ehrengard.

PARTY MEMBER

Bormann joined the NSDAP in February 1927. His party membership number was 60508, which later entitled him to the coveted gold party badge. Nevertheless, he exaggerated his earlier activities, implying involvement in the Kapp putsch. He desperately wanted to pose as one of the 'Old Fighters'.

His first real opportunity came in November 1928. He was asked to take charge of the administration of the 'Relief Fund', an insurance scheme that met the medical expenses of SA men injured in street fights. He managed it with the efficiency of the born bureaucrat.

At the same time he met Gerda, the 19-year-old daughter of one of the 12 Nazi members of the Reichstag, Major Walter Buch. Gerda spouted the same right-wing slogans as her father. Classically Aryan, just short of six foot, she was nearly a head taller than the dark, squat



Bormann. Major Buch was less than enthusiastic about his daughter's choice of suitor, but the couple were married in September 1929. In an early sign of favour, Hitler himself attended the wedding, which was packed with SA men in uniform. Seven months later, their first son, Adolf Martin was born. Even Röhm's roughnecks could count to nine and Bormann became the butt of their jokes.

Bormann was an obsequious toady, fawning to his superiors, brutally overbearing to

subordinates. A domestic tyrant, he insulted his wife in front of guests and was always ready with fists or belt if the children stepped out of line.

In spite of the fact that she bore him 10 children, Bormann spent more time chasing other women than with his wife. In 1943-44 he had an affair with 30-year-old actress Manja Behrens, announcing proudly to Gerda that he had seduced her. Strangely, the two women were still in touch at the end of 1944, by which time Bormann had

Above: Martin Bormann was a master at playing the Third Reich power game. From a position of relative obscurity, he got closer to Hitler than any other Nazi leader, and used that intimacy to bolster his own position in the hierarchy.

ended the relationship.

He moderated his behaviour only when it profited him to do so: a heavy smoker, he never dared smoke near Hitler. He was a binge drinker, but never drank when on duty. He frequently selected the vegetarian menu when dining with the Führer, but gorged himself on sausages in



Above: Martin Bormann married Gerda Buch in September 1929. The wedding was a Nazi affair, and among the guests of honour were Rudolf Hess (left), SA leader Pfeffer von Salomon (third from left) and Adolf Hitler.

Below: Bormann (second from left) lurks in the background as senior Nazi and military figures greet Mussolini following his rescue by German commandos in 1944. By this time, Bormann controlled all access to the Führer.



his room afterwards.

Bormann was appointed *Stabsleiter*, deputy to Rudolf Hess, on 3 July 1933. Hess ran the Political Central Committee – in theory. In practice, he was already losing ground to more recent Nazi converts.

With Hitler as Chancellor, *Amt Hess* became the clearing house for disputes between rival party and government organisations. It was an ideal opportunity for a bureaucrat with sharp elbows, and Bormann steadily accrued more power.

In October 1937 Hess was designated 'deputy Führer' and Bormann became one of the 16

Reichsleiters of the party.

Bormann's responsibilities were transformed: his successful administration of the SA Relief Fund made him the ideal manager for the 'German industry Adolf Hitler Fund', the substantial sums donated by various firms to the Nazi Party.

Hitler kept up the image of the frugal ex-soldier, which melded in his mind with his 'artistic temperament' too fine to be sullied with grubby financial considerations. Bormann seized his opportunity: he looked after the money, anticipating Hitler's every wish. From his earliest days in Hitler's company, he kept

Above: Martin Bormann talks to Eva Braun at Berchtesgaden. Bormann was the prime mover in turning Hitler's Bavarian retreat into the heart of the Nazi regime, though it saw much less use once war broke out.

a notebook with him at all times, scribbling down every passing comment. The priceless utterances of the Führer could later serve to justify whatever Bormann thought appropriate. Since Hitler often contradicted himself, Bormann's index file of Hitler quotations was a flexible instrument indeed.

BAVARIAN HOME

It was thanks to Bormann's bullying enthusiasm that the Berghof was expanded into the true home of Hitler's court. He bought up surrounding properties, built his own burgeoning family a three-storey house and eventually added the tea house at Kehlstein.

In 1938 Hitler bestowed another sign of favour on his hardworking factotum: the *Blutorden* or 'Blood Order',

given to veterans of the 1923 attempted putsch. It had been extended to include men who had spent at least a year in jail for their party activities. Step forward Martin Bormann – even though he was not a Nazi member when involved in the murder of Walter Kadow.

As he wormed his way deeper into Hitler's favour, so Bormann made more enemies. His skill lay in never alienating too many of the Nazi leaders at once, and exploiting the bitter rivalries between them. Nevertheless, as Speer observed, "a few critical words from Hitler and all Bormann's enemies would have been at his throat." But the words never came.

Bormann survived the mysterious flight of his boss to Scotland in May 1941. Hess was replaced by a new office, Party Chancellery, to be controlled by Bormann. Soon, even senior party figures, men from the old days, were unable to see Hitler except by Bormann's permission. "No one can come to the Führer



The Bormann Myth

PARADOXICALLY, it was Bormann's anonymity that made him the most notorious Nazi of the post-war era. Convicted of war crimes, he was sentenced to death at Nuremberg in 1946, but the verdict was pronounced *in absentia*. Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, secretary to the Führer, the second most powerful man in Germany during 1945, had disappeared. He was last seen alive during the evacuation of the Führerbunker after Hitler's suicide.

DID BORMANN SURVIVE?

It was not long before reports of his survival began to circulate. At first he was reputed to be in an Italian monastery, then newspaper reports claimed he had been spotted in South America. And it was not only journalists that were on the look out. The Israeli secret service was on the hunt. Israeli agents had been tracking down Nazi refugees since the end of the war, assassinating or arresting them – its most public success being the kidnapping of Adolf

Eichmann from Argentina in 1960. But the Israelis could not find Bormann.

The truth was simple. Nobody could find Bormann because he had not made it out of Berlin alive in 1945. The overweight bureaucrat had been in no shape to fight his way out of the city. Russians were everywhere and he can have had few illusions as to his fate if caught. The survivors from the Führerbunker split into small groups, and at some point Bormann was cut off with Dr Ludwig Stumpfegger. Fearing capture, they both swallowed cyanide.

Artur Axmann saw the bodies, as did two other eyewitnesses, but both were captured by the Russians. Their testimony did not receive the attention it deserved. The historian Hugh Trevor-Roper instinctively believed Artur Axmann's version of events as early as 1947, when 'The Last Days of Hitler' was published.

In 1972, two skeletons were discovered during building work at the reported death site. One, with a cyanide capsule between the teeth, was the right size and



Above: Martin Bormann, powerless and leaderless, disappeared into the chaos and ruin that was Berlin in May 1945. Although several eyewitnesses testified to having seen his corpse, it was generally believed long after the war that Bormann had reached sanctuary and remained at large.

age as Bormann, and forensic analysis of the teeth matched the Reichsleiter's dental records. It was enough for the German authorities, who in 1973 declared Bormann dead.

But it was not enough for conspiracy theorists. To them, Bormann was the most senior

Nazi to have apparently escaped justice, and the hunt for him continued on and off until the 1990s. Positive identification of the bodies was not made until 1998, when DNA comparison with relatives proved that these were indeed the remains of Martin Bormann.

but through me" declared Bormann, paraphrasing the scriptures. He would approve or reject the proposed agenda in advance and thus built a wall around his Führer.

At his trial, Hermann Goering said, "Bormann was privy to the Führer's most intimate affairs. At certain sessions only he and a few secretaries were allowed to be present and it was there that the most important issues were often decided."

In shielding Hitler from bad news, he isolated Hitler, accelerating the Führer's withdrawal into a fantasy world as the war turned against Germany. He did this with Hitler's conscious approval: Hitler could and did find out anything he wanted to. What he

could not tolerate was when reality diverged from his vision of what it ought to be. He had adopted a similar policy since the mid-1920s, surrounding himself in Munich with an escort that screened him from unscripted conversations. Hitler had always preferred to meet people at the time and on the ground of his choosing: then he could adopt whichever role he deemed appropriate.

IN-FIGHTING TO THE END

Bormann continued the power struggle to the very end. He set up Himmler as commander of Army Group Vistula in 1945, pandering to the Reichsführer's military pretensions. It was a poisoned chalice: Himmler presided over the final defeat on

the eastern front.

Bormann's authority increased as Hitler's empire contracted. According to Nazi Party rules, his senior rank demanded proof of Aryan ancestry back to the 18th Century, and an SS office was still trying to collect the necessary documentation on his behalf in January 1945. One wonders if a sly sense of humour had crept into their correspondence when the officials apologised for the delay, blaming 'the difficult situation' in Saarbrücken, to where his distant ancestors had been traced. The problem was that American tanks were poised to over-run the city.

Goering had long been frozen out of the ruling circle by 1945, yet Bormann never forgot an enemy. When the

Reichsmarschall signalled his intention of taking command once the Führer was trapped in Berlin, Bormann persuaded Hitler that it was treachery and ordered Goering's arrest. Bormann even changed the order from arrest to execution.

Bormann's power evaporated the moment Hitler shot himself. Bunker survivors testify to the way the SS guards ignored him after Hitler's funeral pyre was lit. He sent a last message to his wife, then at Obersalzberg, to kill herself and the children, but it never reached them. His secretary Else Kruger testified that he said "goodbye" to her as they broke out of the bunker. "There's not much sense to it any more," he continued, "I'll have a try but I won't get through."



Barbarossa

The Invasion of Russia

Panzers and panzergrenadiers of von Kleist's 1st Panzergruppe fight through Zhitomir, in the Ukraine.

Operation Barbarossa, the German attack on the Soviet Union, was the biggest invasion in history. It was designed to give Hitler what he wanted most: *Lebensraum* for the 'Aryan' race.

HITLER'S MOST senior generals were invited to the Berghof at the end of August 1939, on the eve of the invasion of Poland. There, in the tranquil surroundings of the Führer's alpine getaway, they realised the true extent of their master's war aims. "In the East I have put my Death's Head formations in place with the command... to send into death many women and children of Polish origin," Hitler proclaimed, "...Poland will be depopulated and settled with Germans... the fate of Russia will be exactly the same." Some of the generals were shocked by what they heard, but most would later deny any knowledge of Hitler's intentions. Hermann Goering was in no doubt though:

witnesses recorded how he literally danced with glee.

It was to be nearly two years before Hitler could realise his ambition. In 18 months his forces had over-run western Europe, smashing every army that stood in their way. Only Britain held out, for reasons Hitler was still unable to comprehend. But there was nothing to stop Germany now. Defeat Russia, and the European land mass would become the new German Empire; Britain would have to make peace.

Invasion

On 22 June 1941 Hitler launched the greatest invasion in military history: three million German and Axis troops attacked the Russian border from the Baltic coast to the Romanian frontier.

His forces included over 150 divisions, including 19 panzer divisions, 1,945 German aircraft and another 1,000 Axis planes. They faced some three million men of the Red Army, which had another million soldiers deployed across southern republics of the USSR and in the Far East where they had recently beaten the Japanese in a series of border clashes. This obscure battle in Manchuria, won by an unknown commander called Georgi Zhukov was little noticed at the time. It was the Red Army's recent dire performance in Finland that attracted comment: the 1939-40 'winter war' had been an unmitigated disaster that cost the lives of some 200,000 Russian soldiers. Against the hopelessly outnumbered Finnish army, the Red Army appeared to

Although mechanised forces spearheaded the smashing attack on the USSR, the majority of the German troops involved were foot-slogging infantry.



be no better than the Tsar's hapless army of 1916 – brave soldiers sent to their deaths by incompetent, politically-appointed generals.

The Russians were taken by surprise. Stalin was determined to do nothing that could provoke a German invasion before he had reorganised his forces to meet it. Apparently unable to believe that Hitler would break their cynical alliance so soon, he saw to it that the USSR continued to deliver strategic materials right up to the very night of the attack. A German soldier who deserted on 21 June with news of the attack was interrogated by the NKVD. His story was reported to Stalin who paused, then whispered his familiar instruction into the telephone. The unfortunate corporal was taken outside and

shot.

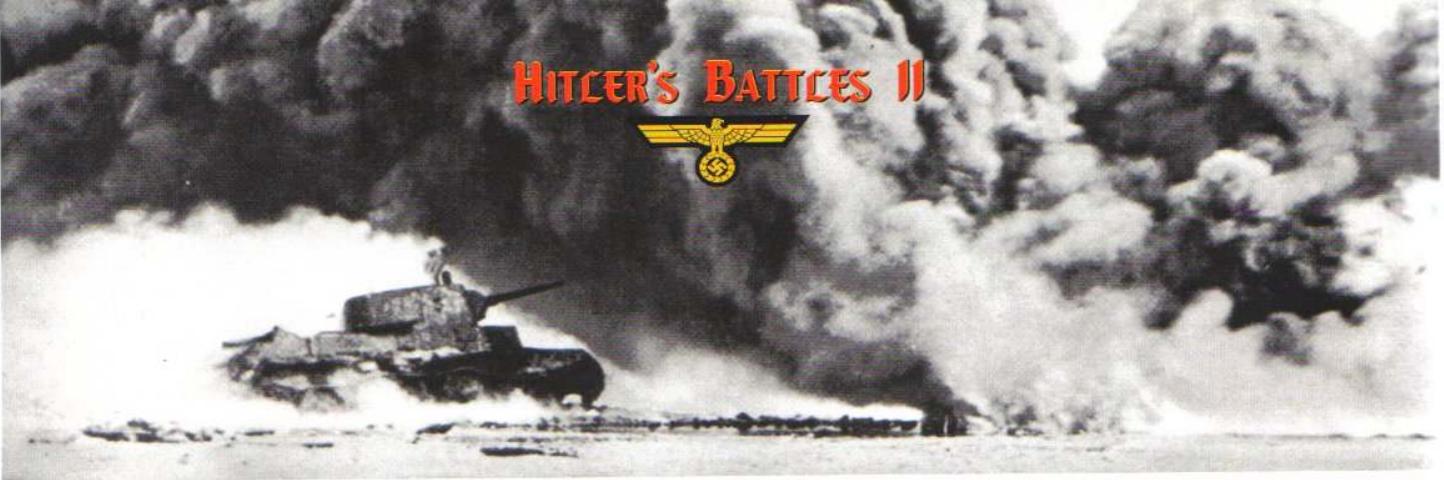
The Luftwaffe had been overflying Russian airbases for months before the invasion – at least one Russian officer was shot for firing on German photo-reconnaissance planes that blamed 'navigational errors' for their intrusion. Now it scored the greatest victory in its history, wiping out the VVS (Russian air force) in a matter of days. VVS bases were in the process of expansion, so many air regiments were doubled up on the airstrips, aircraft packed together where a single bomb could destroy a whole squadron. If they got into the air, the Russians had neither the skill nor the aircraft to challenge the Messerschmitt Bf 109 and many German fighter pilots began to run up incredible numbers of



victories. German bombers met little opposition, and attacked the endless columns of Russian ground troops that moved here and there with little sign of strategic direction. Indeed, the bombers attacked so successfully that by late summer, Germany was running short of bombs!

The invasion force was

Above: A BA-32 armoured car of the Red Army blazes as the Wehrmacht punches through and destroys Soviet opposition. The Red Army was woefully unprepared for the German invasion, partly because Stalin refused to believe that Hitler would invade, and partly because the purges of the previous three years had slaughtered many of the army's most intelligent and flexible commanders.



Above: A Czech-built Panzer 38(t) speeds through a burning oil facility at Mariupol on the Sea of Azov. This was reached by spearheads of Army Group South in October, cutting off large Soviet forces in the Crimea and in southern Ukraine.



Left: A Panzer IV passes marching German infantrymen in the summer of 1941. Although German equipment was no better than (and in some cases worse than) that used by the Russians, superior German tactics gave them the advantage.



Below: A mortar team engages a Soviet infantry force. At first, the Russians seemed to be easy prey for the Wehrmacht, but ordinary Russian soldiers often proved capable of extraordinary resistance, and by-passed units had to be attacked and nullified.

divided into three army groups. Army Group North started in East Prussia and advanced rapidly through the Baltic States. Its ultimate objective was Leningrad, the former Russian capital, birthplace of the Communist revolution, and a key industrial centre. Army Group Centre was aimed at Moscow, via Minsk and Smolensk, the same route taken by Napoleon in 1812. Army Group South, deployed on a giant arc from southern Poland to Romania, was tasked with occupying the great plains of the Ukraine and southern Russia.

"Before three months have passed, we shall witness a collapse in Russia, the like of which has never been seen in history," Hitler announced on the day of the invasion. "Kick in the door, and the whole rotten edifice will collapse," he told his

generals. And he seemed to be right. The German tank forces, organised into four *panzergruppen* broke clean through the frontline and headed unchecked deep into Russia. Whole Russian armies were trapped, as hard-marching German infantry divisions swept on to link up with the tanks, German aircraft pounding anything that looked like a Russian counter-attack.

Red Army ruin

Cut off, with little ammunition or fuel, and often no instructions from Moscow, the Red Army forces along the frontier disintegrated. Army Group Centre's tanks advanced 200 miles in five days, captured Minsk and left the Russian 3rd, 10th and 13th armies surrounded. Some 350,000

Russians surrendered.

The advance of Army Group Centre and an equally rapid sweep into the southern Ukraine by Army Group South created a deep salient around Kiev. The *panzergruppen* peeled off to seal nearly 50 Russian divisions in what became known as the Kiev Pocket. Denied permission to retreat until it was too late, the trapped Russian forces made desperate attempts to break out, their commander dying on a German minefield in the process. Between 500,000 and 650,000 Russian soldiers were captured.

It seemed Russia was finished. In America, President Roosevelt's advisors predicted a German victory in the eight weeks that Hitler had promised. British Prime Minister Churchill received an equally gloomy prognosis from his generals.

OKH, the German army high command was so confident that it reduced its requirement for winter clothing and equipment. It was decided that only enough winter equipment would be needed for a 60-division garrison to keep order in the conquered land.

On 6 September, Hitler decreed that Moscow would be the next objective. Army Group North's breakneck advance had come to a sudden stop as it entered the swampy forests that surrounded Leningrad. Its *panzergruppe* was assigned to Army Group Centre, which now had three-quarters of Germany's tank forces at its disposal. In another giant battle of encirclement, two *panzergruppen* were to bypass Moscow to the north while General Heinz Guderian's *Panzergruppe 2*

The biggest invasion in history

Army Group North

Smallest of the three army groups, tasked with attacking and taking Leningrad. Under the command of Field Marshal Ritter von Leeb, the army group encountered stiffening resistance as its units moved north.

Army Group North

18th Army
4th Pz Group
16th Army

Luftflotte IV

9th Army
3rd Pz Group

4th Army
2nd Pz Group

6th Army
1st Pz Group
17th Army

Army Group Centre

Luftflotte II

Army Group South

Luftflotte I

Hungarian Divisions

Army Group South

Although having more divisions than either of the northern army groups, the weakest of the three. It had the largest area of operations, and about one third of its troops were from Rumania and Hungary.

Army Group Centre

The spearhead of the German offensive. Although it had slightly fewer divisions than Army Group South, the units were more concentrated, and Field Marshal von Bock had twice as many panzer divisions under his command. The army group was originally targeted on Moscow, but units were diverted to assist both of the other army groups at various stages in the campaign.

Moscow

Kaluga

Tula

Bryansk

Orel

Kharkov

Lokhvitsa

Dniepr

Vinnitsa

Yuzhni Bug

Black Sea

Sea of Azov

Odessa

Uman

Zhitomir

Kiev

3rd Rumanian Army
11th Army
4th Rumanian Army

Riga

Dvina

Daugavpils

Idritsa

Vitebsk

Berezina

Minsk

Mogilev

Bobruisk

Gomel

Lokhvitsa

Orel

Kharkov

Dnepr

Vinnitsa

Uman

Zhitomir

Kiev

Dniepr

Yuzhni Bug

Odessa

Black Sea

Sea of Azov

Odessa

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Uman

Zhitomir

Kiev



passed to the south of the city. The tanks would link up east of Moscow, cutting the Soviet capital off from reinforcements and supplies.

Assigned the codename Taifun (typhoon) the German drive on Moscow began on 2 October. The Russians had concentrated

huge forces to bar the road to their capital, but these were smashed yet again. In two more great battles of encirclement another 650,000 Russians were captured. The citizens of Moscow sensed which way the wind was blowing: party officials started burning documents and

whole government departments were transferred east. BBC correspondent Alexander Werth reported a palpable sense of panic. Then Stalin announced that he would be staying.

There were three reasons why the wily Soviet leader refused to abandon the Kremlin. On 6 October German forces on the Moscow front awoke to find their tanks dusted with snow. Autumnal rains alternated with freezing nights, a seasonal phenomenon known to Russians as the *rasputitsa* (lit. 'time without roads'). There were few metalled roads in the USSR, most were wide dirt strips that now dissolved into a sticky quagmire that even tanks were unable to cross. Germans on foot sank past the top of their jackboots. Airfields became unusable and the advance ground to a halt. Stalin's second source of confidence came from his spy ring in Japan where, it was reported, Tojo's cabinet had definitely ruled out an attack on the USSR. Japan would attack America instead. The 750,000 Russian soldiers in the Far East were available to reinforce the depleted Russian forces fighting the Germans. Thirdly, the Red Army was replacing its staggering losses with unbelievable speed: 143 new divisions were mobilised between July and December, and 84 of the divisions destroyed in battle were reconstituted.

Winter arrives

The *rasputitsa* lasted for four weeks. Then, on 7 November, the temperature plunged and the liquid mud turned rock hard. The German advance began again with breakthroughs in the south as well as towards Moscow; General von Manstein's 11th Army broke into the Crimea, the great factories of Kharkov were taken, and the Donbass region, heart of Russia's coal and steel industries, was finally over-run. At the end of the month, the 7th panzer division established a bridge-head over the Volga canal. Its advance elements were soon

within 12 miles of the city and in the cold, clear winter air the spires of the Kremlin were visible through binoculars.

Daytime temperatures around Moscow varied from -5 to -12°C and the Germans found it increasingly difficult to keep fighting in the same uniforms they had worn through the baking heat of summer. Supplies of every kind were simply failing to arrive at the front, where battalions were reduced to a fraction of their authorised strength, panzer divisions counted themselves lucky to have 50 tanks still running.

Supply logjam

The Russian railways used a wider track than the German rail system, and it took longer than anticipated to convert them. In fact, the German supply network had begun to falter during the great advances of the summer. It proved impossible to sustain the frontline units using the primitive Russian rail and road network. It did not help that the German forces had been filled out with vehicles from all over Europe. There were 2,000 different types in service, with few interchangeable parts; Army Group Centre's spare parts inventory ran to over one million items. By early autumn the Luftwaffe had been forced to ferry its own supplies forward in bombers. Its fuel and other essential supplies were all held up in bottlenecks from Poland to the Smolensk-Moscow highway.

The logistical disaster had actually been predicted by the quartermaster general, Generalmajor Friederich Paulus. In a 1940 wargame he had demonstrated that even if the Germans defeated the Russian army hands-down, it would be unable to supply its forward units properly and the advance would stop of its own accord. Russia could not be defeated in a single campaign like Poland or France.

And now they were facing a new Soviet commander. General Zhukov had risen fast after his success against Japan. One of the



Above: As the Wehrmacht advanced, the number of cut-off pockets of Soviet resistance increased. Although millions of Red Army men had surrendered, those that continued to fight did so to the last bullet.

Below: The Germans received a shock when a new Soviet tank began to appear. The T-34 was more powerful than anything in the Wehrmacht's inventory, and once available in numbers it would be a major threat.



Below: As the Germans pressed closer to Moscow, its citizens began to improvise barricades and tank traps. Had the Wehrmacht managed to get to Moscow, it would have faced a vicious street fight.



SLAUGHTER IN THE UKRAINE



Above: A Stuka's-eye view of a Soviet column in the Ukraine. With the Red air force all but wiped from the skies, the vulnerable dive-bombers could go about their business in safety, and they wreaked havoc.

Below: German troops were welcomed by Ukrainians, who had suffered under Stalin in the previous decade. But the SS, SD and Einsatzgruppen soon moved in, and potential allies were turned into enemies.



THE LARGEST concentration of Red Army troops lay at Kiev and in the area immediately to the north. On 24 August Hitler ordered Guderian to lead his Panzergruppe down to assist in the occupation of the Ukraine.

By 10 September Stalin was receiving direct appeals from the Soviet commanders, Marshal Budenny and his political commissar Nikita Khrushchev, for permission for their still large forces to be allowed to escape through the rapidly narrowing gap between Guderian and Kleist. Stalin insisted that all armies, all divisions should stand fast where they were.

Guderian's panzers met Kleist's at Lohvitsa on 15 September and by the evening of the 17th, the biggest encirclement of the campaign – perhaps the biggest

in history – had been formed. It was tight, and few caught within could have escaped. Budenny and Khrushchev were flown out, Major-General Bagramyan brought out about 50 men; but most of the senior officers of the South-West Front were killed as they tried to escape, or were rounded up and captured. And with them into graves or prison camps of the most appalling nature went nearly 500,000 Russian soldiers.

Guderian and Kleist were jubilant, Rundstedt modestly gratified that the greatest single success of German arms had been won by the army group under his command. In that atmosphere of heady euphoria, few remarked that for all their triumphs and all the ground won, something had been lost: time.



Above: The massive German pincer movement around Kiev trapped four Soviet armies with all of their equipment. Much of it was to be salvaged and used by the Wehrmacht.

Below: At least half a million Russian Soldiers went into captivity at Kiev: most were to die over the next two years after being kept under barbaric conditions with minimal food or medical care.





Hitler's top commanders

Hitler's senior commanders in Russia shared a number of characteristics: most had been in the army since the 1890s and were vastly experienced General Staff officers. They all had hands-on experience in directing large numbers of troops, both before the war

and in the Wehrmacht's successful campaigns in Poland and France. They could also call on the abilities of battle-tested subordinates, who had invented and had already proven themselves masters of the new style of warfare known as Blitzkrieg.



Gerd von Rundstedt
Commander of Army Group South, von Rundstedt was the senior serving officer in the German Army. Called out of retirement for the Polish campaign, he would command army groups in France and on the Eastern and Western fronts in the war before finally being dismissed in 1945.



Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb
The Bavarian von Leeb commanded the troops in the occupation of the Sudetenland in 1938 and led Army Group C against the Maginot Line in 1940. He led Army Group North in the Russian campaign, before being dismissed in January 1942 for making an unauthorised retreat.



Fedor Von Bock
Bock commanded the troops involved in the Anschluss with Austria and went on to command Army Groups in Poland, France and on the Eastern Front. He was dismissed in 1942 for disagreeing with Hitler's plans to mount simultaneous attacks on Stalingrad and in the Caucasus.



Heinz Guderian
Guderian did not hold an Army Group command, but as Germany's leading armoured expert he had immense influence. His Panzergruppe headed the Wehrmacht's drive on Moscow, but he was dismissed in December 1941 after pulling his units back from an impossible position.



Above: A KV-1 heavy tank rolls through Moscow on its way to the front line in December 1941. By now the Red Army had learned how to use its tanks effectively.

Below: A T-34 crew prepares for action. The Soviet counterattack in front of their capital gave the all-conquering Wehrmacht its first setback of the war.



masterminds behind the Soviet reserve system, he had been posted to the front in September after an argument with Stalin. He administered a sharp defeat to German forces outside Smolensk before his recall to command a full-scale counter-attack outside Moscow.

It came on 5 December. The temperature plummeted to -15°C and snow lay more than a metre thick in places. Unable to dig in properly, the under-manned German units were torn apart; the few serviceable German tanks were unable to manoeuvre in these conditions and the fuel was stuck hundreds of miles behind the front. The Luftwaffe was unable to help: its aircraft took an average of five hours to get airborne even if the ground crews maintained fires under the engines to keep them from freezing. Russia's latest tanks, the T-34 and KV-1 had wide tracks and engines designed to keep running even in Arctic weather; Russian guns and small arms were similarly robust, built

to function in snow or mud, and their soldiers wore thickly insulated uniforms.

The Germans had to retreat – in spite of Hitler's demand that they give up no ground. All three Army Group commanders were sacked, along with previous favourites like panzer generals Guderian and Hoepner. Hitler fired army chief-of-staff von Brauchitsch and appointed himself commander-in-chief. The former corporal would take personal charge of the war in the East.

Widening war

As his soldiers fought for their lives in the snow, Hitler re-doubled the stakes.

On 7 December he learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and his ambassador in Washington reported (quite wrongly) that President Roosevelt was likely to declare war on all the Axis powers. Determined to show the world who held the initiative, Hitler now declared war on the USA.



The first misery for German soldiers came with the rain and bottomless mud of autumn (left). The first freeze hardened the ground and let the tanks roll (below), but before long it was so cold that the petrol was freezing in vehicle fuel tanks.



General Winter

Anyone fighting in Russia has to remember one thing: the major adversary for a third of the year is not the Russian army. It is the Russian winter, and failure to deal with it effectively means death.

After the triumphs of the heady summer of 1941, the war had settled down into a vicious battle of attrition – in conditions for which the Soviets were prepared better than the Germans.

In 1812, Napoleon's huge army had been driven from Moscow by 'General Winter' and 130 years later the Wehrmacht encountered the same foe. Hitler had expected the battle to be a walkover, but once the first snow fell early in October, any thought of an

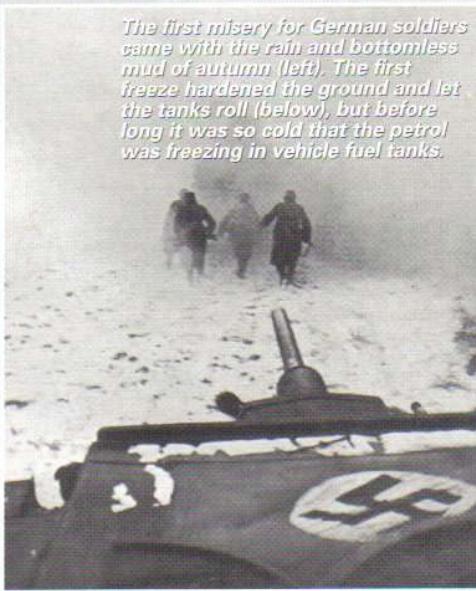
easy victory disappeared.

The onset of the Russian winter found the invading armies woefully unprepared. The misery generated by sustained sub-zero temperatures was compounded by the mud that, each autumn and spring, turned the steppe into a bottomless mire.

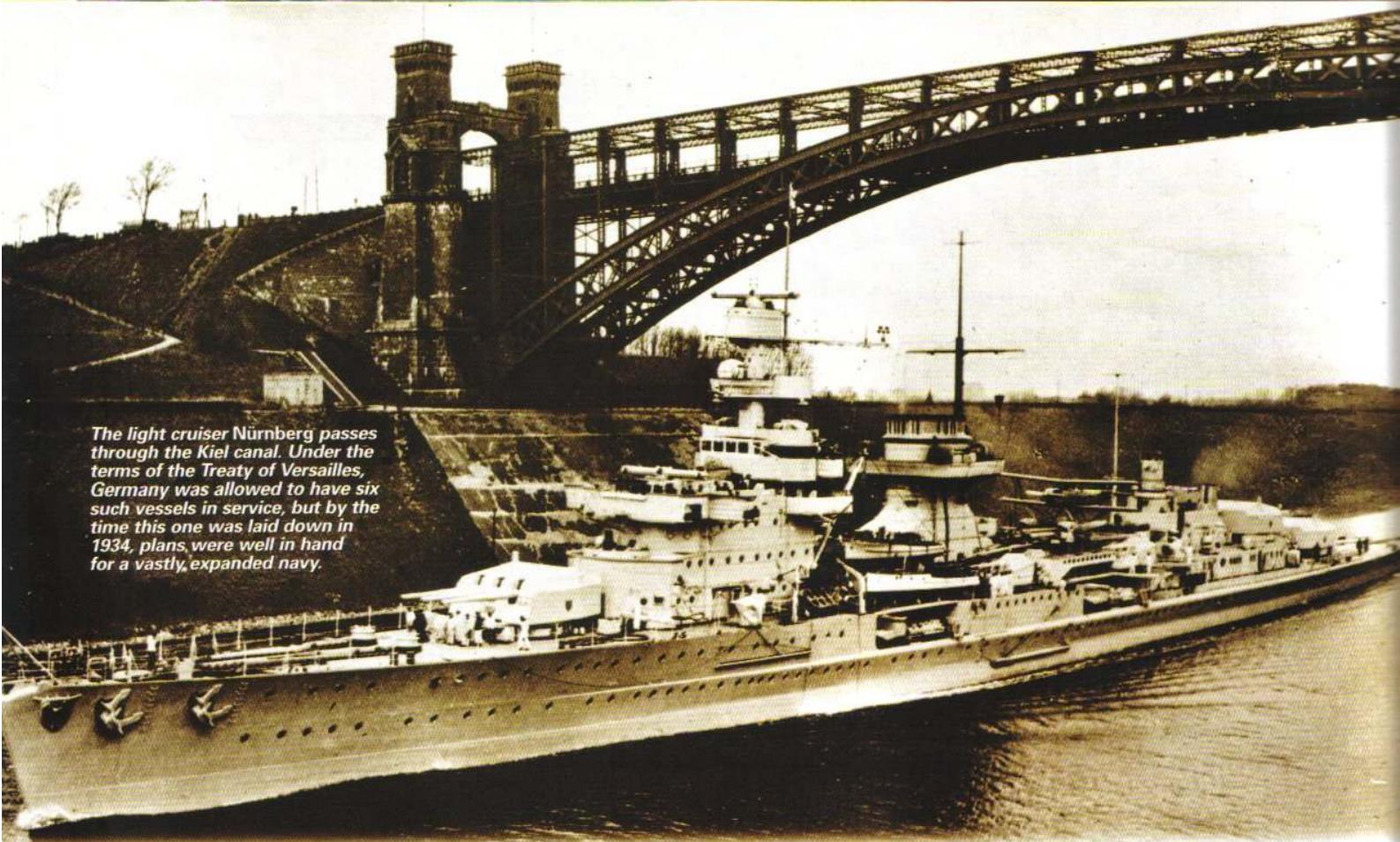
The German army fell apart. It had already suffered some 750,000 casualties, but losses soared once the full fury of winter descended. The army reported over 100,000 frostbite cases in December alone. The generals tried to pull back, but Hitler countermanded their orders. "Where would they retreat to?" he asked, "was it warmer 100 km to the west?" There would be no retreat. The German army would stand fast, just as it had in World War I.

Right: On the fringes of Moscow, the overstressed German supply system broke down. Units were short of food, fuel, ammunition and medical supplies. And frostbite was striking down thousands.

Below Right: By contrast, the fresh Siberian divisions thrown into the battle by the Soviets were well-equipped and thoroughly used to the cold. Now it was the turn of the Germans to be outclassed.



New T-34 tanks roll direct from the factory to the front line. The Russians had weathered the Nazi storm and now the war settled down to a fierce battle of attrition.



The light cruiser Nürnberg passes through the Kiel canal. Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was allowed to have six such vessels in service, but by the time this one was laid down in 1934, plans were well in hand for a vastly expanded navy.

CRUISERS & DESTROYERS

The German navy's capital ships drew most of the attention – but it was the cruisers and destroyers which did most of the surface fleet's work.

UNDER THE TERMS of the 1935 Anglo-German Naval Agreement, the British government accepted a massive increase in the German navy and relaxed previous restrictions on German submarine building, imposed after World War I. Two heavy cruisers were announced as part of the programme: the first of a five-strong class that was supposed to conform with the Washington Treaty. This stipulated a maximum displacement of 10000 tonnes and a maximum calibre for the main armament of 203 mm (8 in). In fact, the Kriegsmarine cheated; the first

two *Hipper* and *Blücher* displaced 13900 tonnes, enabling them to carry more armour than their British or American equivalents. They were followed by a third unit, *Prinz Eugen* which had an upgraded powerplant, then two more, taking the famous battlecruiser names from World War I, *Seydlitz* and *Lützow*. The last pair were sold, incomplete, to the Soviet Union in 1939 as a sweetener to the Nazi-Soviet pact. They were not completed before the German invasion of 1941.

CONFUSION TO THE FOE

With 'Atlantic bows' and a clinker screen on the funnel top, these heavy cruisers had almost

identical profiles to the two Bismarck-class battleships. Indeed, when *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* encountered Hood and *Prince of Wales* in the Denmark Strait, the British mistook the cruiser for the battleship at the beginning of the action.

Blücher had already been lost: carrying hundreds of troops in April 1940 she led a charge up Oslo fjord, but was torpedoed and sunk by a Norwegian coastal defence battery.

Hipper spent much of 1940 at sea, ranging far into the Atlantic to attack Allied convoys and sinking a dozen vessels totalling 66000 gross tonnes. However, the heavy cruisers proved to be fuel-hungry sprinters, not suited to



"Our surface fleet is so small compared to the Royal Navy that all we will be able to do, even when making every effort to succeed, will be to show how to die with honour."

**Grossadmiral
Erich Raeder
1939**

long-distance commerce raiding and *Hipper* spent the next two years in Norway, venturing to sea occasionally to menace the Arctic convoys. She was paid off after the Barents sea debacle on 31 December 1942: superior German surface forces failing to destroy a convoy defended with consummate skill by its small British escort.

ESCAPING THE BRITISH

Prinz Eugen anchored in Brest after the disastrous Bismarck sortie and escaped back to Germany in the 'Channel Dash' with Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. Employed in the Baltic thereafter, she assisted in the evacuation of East Prussia in 1945 and provided naval gunfire support for several beleaguered garrisons as the Soviet army swept along the German coast. Ceded to the USA after the war, she was expended as a target at Bikini Atoll where her radioactive hulk remains to this day.

GERMAN PLANS

Hitler went to war before the German naval construction programme had got into its stride. The Kriegsmarine had only five light cruisers available, not counting the Emden, completed in 1925 and used for training. The three 'K' class of 1929-30 shipped nine 152-mm (6-in) guns, but departed from convention in having two of the three turrets aft (and offset too, to simplify ammunition handling arrangements). As a class, these cruisers suffered from excess

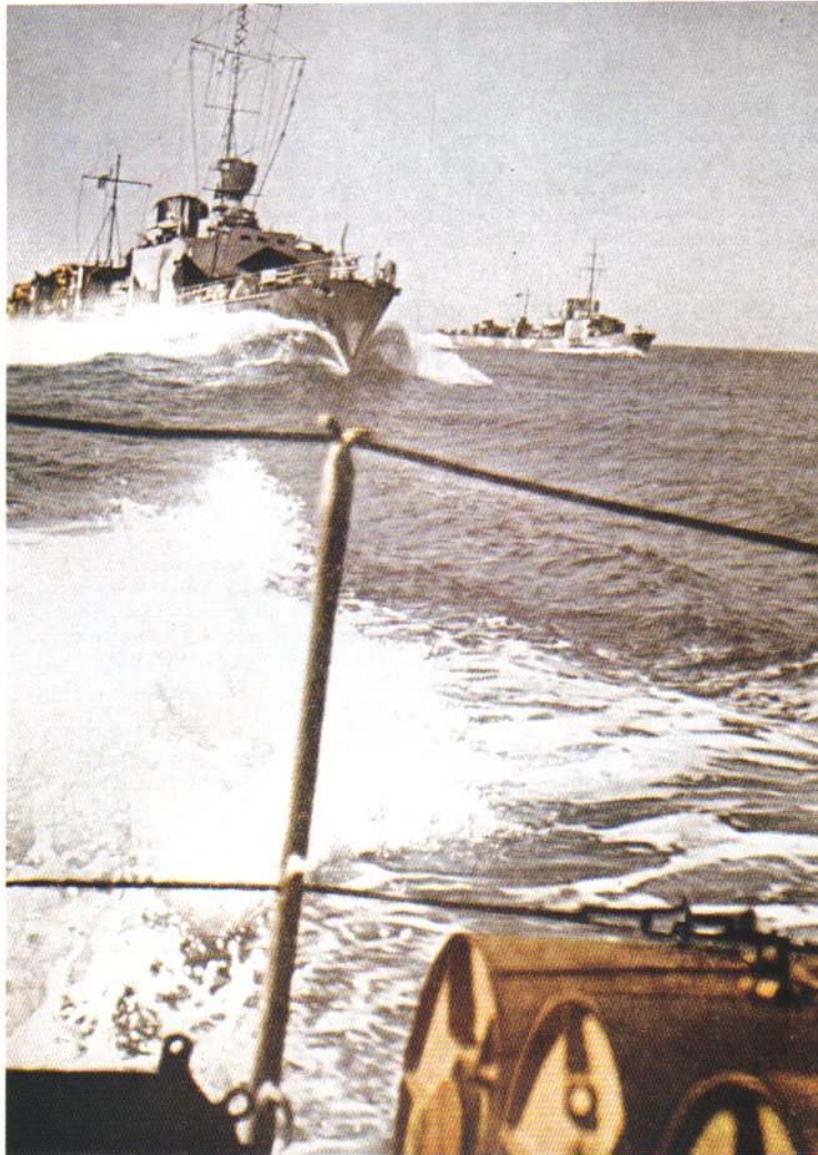
weight, a feature they would share with German destroyer designs of the same period. The fourth unit, *Leipzig*, had a single, trunked funnel in place of the earlier ships' two, which gave the AAA batteries better arcs and saved some topweight. An extra metre in the beam increased her stability. All were designed with commerce raiding in mind and had a diesel for cruising as well as steam turbines. The final ship, *Nürnberg* had a slightly larger hull as the vessels continued to have a stability problem.

The light cruisers played little part in the war after the Norwegian campaign in which *Königsberg* had the unfortunate distinction of becoming the first warship to be sunk in action by carrier aircraft (FAA Skuas, flying from Scotland). *Karlsruhe* was scuttled after being torpedoed by the British submarine *Truant*. *Leipzig* had the indignity of being wrecked in collision with the cruiser *Prinz Eugen* in October 1944.

INTERWAR DESTROYERS

The first destroyers built by Germany since 1918 were the Maass class, a group of 16 laid down during 1934-35. Their standard displacement of 2200 tonnes dwarfed that of most contemporaries and their armament included five 127-mm (5-in) guns: enough to challenge older cruisers. Weight was saved by the use of welded construction and aluminium was used in the superstructure. However, their high-pressure steam machinery caused endless difficulties. The navy recognised that the Maass class attempted too much on a limited displacement, and the next sub-class of German destroyers, the six 'Von Roeder' types, were three metres longer and half a metre broader, although their armament and machinery were identical.

Such was the pace of German naval construction that it outstripped the capacity of German yards, and some of these destroyers took four years to complete. The Kriegsmarine's



Above: The most numerous type of large German warship were the light escort destroyers or Torpedoboote. These vessels were used much more intensively than their larger brethren, serving mostly in the cut-throat fighting off the French coast.

Below: Prinz Eugen enters Brest after separating from the doomed Bismarck. Prinz Eugen was one of three 'Hipper' class heavy cruisers to see action. Nominal built to treaty limits of 10000 tonnes, the 'Hipper's' actually displaced as much as 19000 tonnes.



Destroyer Escorts

IN BOTH WORLD WARS, the German navy operated large numbers of 'Torpedo Boats' – in effect small destroyers. Without the need to operate with the fleet, these torpedo boats were smaller and cheaper to build than conventional destroyers, but could carry a respectable gun armament as well as torpedoes and mines.

Torpedo boats were the first new-build vessels permitted to the Weimar Republic after World War I. Displacing up to 1300 tonnes, the first dozen vessels entered service between 1926 and 1929. Based on World War I destroyer designs, they proved successful in service. However, during World War II their versatility meant that they were most often used in the close-range war in the North Sea, the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay, and all 12 were lost.

These ships were followed in the 1930s by 21 numbered ships of the 'Type 35' and 'Type 37' classes. Smaller, with single funnels and a reduced armament, they were not an improvement on their predecessors. However, they were used as escorts, submarine chasers, and offshore minelayers with some degree of success. About half were lost during the war, most being bombed while in harbour.

The 15 vessels of the 'Type 39' class launched between 1941 and 1944 returned to the two-funnel layout and heavier gun armament of the original design. Used primarily as destroyer escorts, they suffered heavily in the bitter fighting in the Bay of Biscay, at least five being sunk in action. Four of the class were destroyed by Soviet mines during operations in the Baltic late in 1944.

22 destroyers were the core of the force that invaded Norway in the face of a far superior Allied surface fleet. However, the boldness of the original operation was not matched once the troops were ashore. Ten German destroyers were sunk during the two battles of Narvik in April 1940: the boldness of the British paying dividends; the vacillation by the German commander (later lost with the *Scharnhorst*) setting a pattern for future surface actions between the Kriegsmarine and Royal Navy.

DISASTER AT NARVIK

The annihilation of the German destroyers in Norway was celebrated as a heroic stand against superior odds. A new 'Narvik flotilla' was formed in late-1940 from the next class of destroyers, laid down in 1937-38. Many of the survivors of the Narvik battle were transferred to the new boats which reverted to the old German practice of using numbers, not names for destroyers and smaller warships.

What became known as the 'Narvik' class packed a terrific punch for a destroyer: four 150-mm (5.9-in) guns with the forward pair in a turret and the

aft pair in single mountings. Production of the turrets was too slow, so some were completed with a single 150-mm gun forward, replaced by the twin mounting when possible. Too big for destroyers and too small for light cruisers, the Z23-34 types were required to have high endurance, high speed and heavy armament. In heavy seas their forward turret proved wet and unreliable: once again the Germans had shoe-horned too much into the design. The next two units, Z35 and Z36 reverted to five 127-mm guns, but Z37-39 had five 150-mm guns. The shells weighed some 45 kg (100 lbs) but still had to be loaded by hand. The forward turrets were disproportionately heavy and the boats yawed badly in heavy seas, a situation worsened in the Arctic by the inevitable icing.

TORPEDO BOATS

The name 'destroyer' derived from 'torpedo boat destroyer', a class of small vessels built in the first decade of the 20th Century to protect battleships from torpedo boats. Over time, they evolved into multi-purpose platforms, carrying both guns



Above: With their single funnel and 105-mm gun at the stern, Type 35/37 Torpedo boats were fairly easy to distinguish from their predecessors and successors. This is one of the first eight boats, launched in 1939.

Below: T23 was the second of the Type 39 boats to enter service. Larger than the Type 37, it was a genuine small destroyer with four 105-mm guns. T23 survived the war, and was taken by the Royal Navy. Passed to the French in 1946, it was decommissioned ten years later.

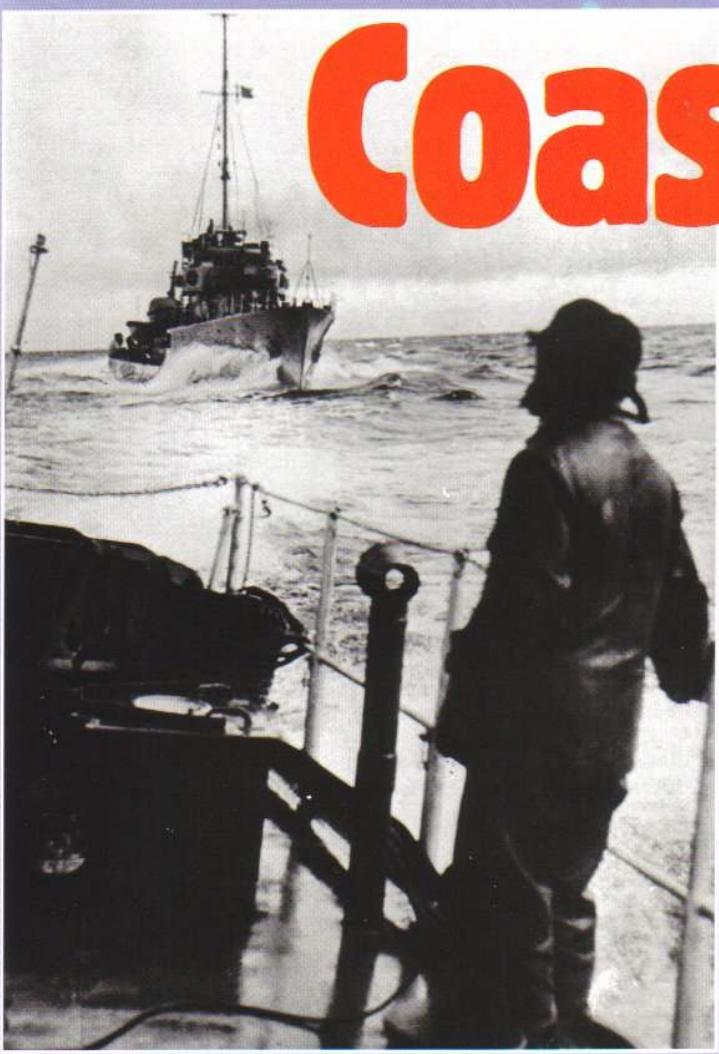


'Möwe'-class torpedo boats form line ahead during pre-war exercises. Based on Imperial German Navy designs, they were classed as destroyers when completed in the late 1920s. However, they were reclassified as torpedo boats in 1934, when the Kriegsmarine's first true fleet destroyers were laid down.





Coastal War



LARGE WARSHIPS and U-boats grabbed most of the Kriegsmarine's headlines during the war, but it was the destroyers and coastal craft which did most of the German navy's close-quarters fighting.

Larger fleet destroyers were used extensively in northern waters. They escorted capital ships and heavy cruisers in forays against the arctic convoy routes, but they also mounted attacks in their own right. This was dangerous, however: at least five ships were sunk in surface actions with British cruisers and destroyers, and another six were destroyed or damaged beyond repair by mines.

Smaller craft lacked the endurance for such missions. Their primary functions were coastal convoy escort, attacking Allied coastal trade, inshore submarine hunting and minelaying. Areas of operation included the Baltic, the North Sea coasts of Denmark, Germany and Holland, the English Channel, the Brittany coast of France and the Bay of Biscay.

These were far and away the most dangerous waters of the

European conflict. They were well within the range of land-based air power. The RAF and the Soviet air force accounted for at least 15 boats, some being attacked at sea while others were wrecked in harbour.

Mines were also a threat: at least seven T-boats were lost, including three on a single day in the Baltic in 1944. One was sunk by the Royal Navy submarine *Swordfish*, and four came out on the wrong end of attacks by coastal torpedo boats. Another four were sunk by British cruisers and destroyers, three in one action in the Bay of Biscay on the night of 28 December 1943.

But it was not all one-sided: one of the most effective attacks of the war was carried out on 22 October 1943 by the experienced crews of five 'Elbing'-class torpedo boats.

Escorting a blockade runner off the Brittany coast, the five boats launched 24 torpedoes against the British light cruiser HMS *Charybdis* leading six destroyers. The cruiser and one 'Hunt'-class destroyer were sunk, and the German boats escaped without being hit.

Above left: Speed and stealth were the keys to survival in the coastal war. Early operations by day were dangerous, a danger which increased as Allied maritime air power grew.

Below: A flotilla of Torpedo boats head out into the North Sea. The quadruple 20-mm cannon mount from which the photo is taken indicates that it is relatively late in the war: though surface ships, submarines and mines took their toll of German destroyers, it was the aircraft which proved the biggest threat.



Above: A torpedo is launched from a Kriegsmarine destroyer in northern waters. Many of the larger destroyers were based in Norwegian fjords for much of the war, where they were used to escort capital ships and heavy cruisers in rare forays against Allied arctic convoys taking supplies to Russia.





EVOLUTION OF GERMAN DESTROYERS

THE GERMAN HIGH command never appreciated the potential of its surface fleet, and during the war Kriegsmarines' destroyers were inefficiently deployed.

Recommencing destroyer construction in the early 1930s after a 15-year break, the Germans produced the 'Maass' type. A very conventional ship, it was well armed, of adequate size and could outperform the contemporary British destroyer.

However, like the British destroyers it appeared a little nondescript. The British didn't care, just as long as they had enough hulls to do the job, but the Germans looked for more dash, feeling the need to respond to French practice.

Between the wars the French exerted great influence through the magnificent series of big destroyers they built. The French empire was not as extensive as the British, so they did not need as many vessels, and they could afford to build fewer, larger ships on their allocated total displacement figure.

While the big Frenchmen were extremely fast and heavily armed, they had some stability problems. But they really looked the part, and encouraged both

the Italians and Germans to build in a like image. The resulting Axis designs being large and overgunned were poor sea-boats, suffering not only from excessive topweight but unreliable armament and, worse, unreliable machinery.

The latter resulted from a beguiling principle that German designers adopted: using high pressure steam turbines would mean more power from less space.

In practice it resulted in endless technical difficulties. The Americans did not crack some of the problems until the 1960s. The unreliability of their engines forced German designers to develop plans for destroyers with combined steam and diesel propulsion and, finally, diesel propulsion alone. The lack of priority accorded to surface ship production – correctly, for submarines were far more cost-effective – prevented these ships ever getting beyond the prototype stage.

While, later in the war, all Axis destroyers had their AA armament enhanced to a greater or lesser degree, they proved equally poor AA platforms and just as vulnerable as Allied ships to air attack.

SPECIFICATION 'Hipper' class cruisers

Displacement: 13900 tonnes (standard), 18600 tonnes (full load)
 Armament: eight x 203-mm (8-in); 12 x 105-mm (4.1-in) dual-purpose; 12 x 37-mm AA; 8 x 533-mm (21-in) torpedo tubes; 2 x aircraft; capacity for 160 mines
 Power: 100,000 shaft horse power (shp) steam plant
 Maximum speed: 32.5 knots
 Dimensions: 210 x 21.8 x 7.9 m
 Armour: sides 80 mm, deck 60 mm, turrets 160 mm
 Crew: 1,600
 Class: *Admiral Hipper, Blücher, Prinz Eugen, Lützow, Seydlitz*

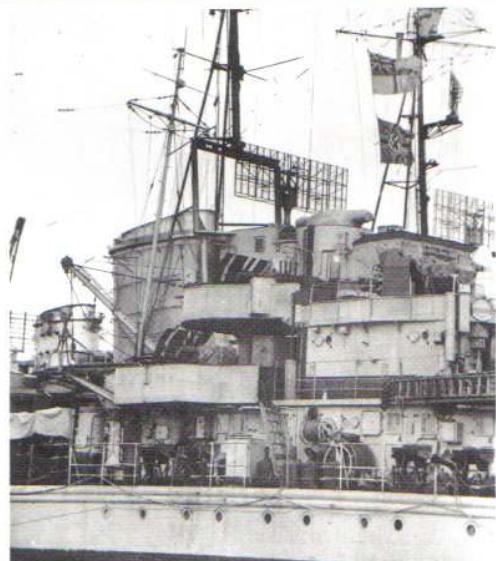
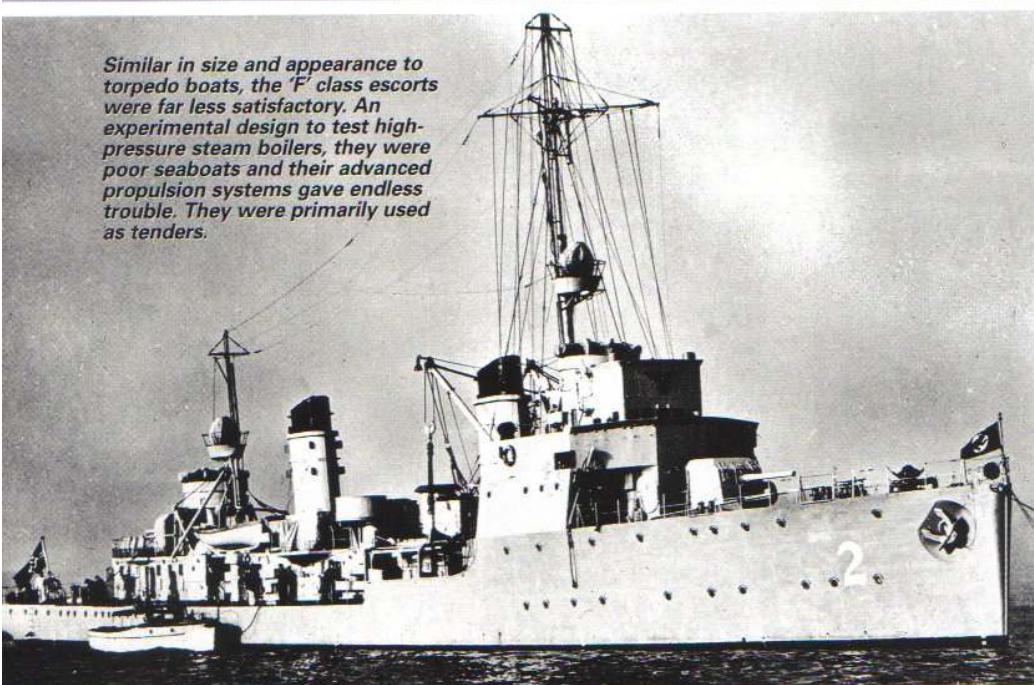
SPECIFICATION 'Köln' class light cruisers

Displacement: 6980 tonnes (standard), 8380 tonnes (full load)
 Armament: nine x 152-mm (6-in); 8 x 88-mm, 8 x 37-mm AA; 12 x 533-mm (21-in) torpedo tubes; 2 x aircraft
 Power: 66,000 shp steam turbines, 12,400 bhp diesels
 Maximum speed: 32 knots
 Dimensions: 181 x 16.4 x 6.4 m
 Armour: decks 25 mm, sides 50 mm, turrets 60 mm
 Crew: 896
 Class: *Köln, Karlsruhe, Königsberg, Leipzig, Nürnberg*

SPECIFICATION 'Type 35' Torpedo boat

Displacement: 844 tonnes (standard), 1088 tonnes (full load)
 Armament: one x 105-mm (4.1-in) gun; 8 x 20-mm AA; 6 x 533-mm (21-in) torpedo tubes; 30 mines
 Power: 31,000 shp
 Maximum speed: 35.5 knots
 Dimensions: 84 x 8.6 x 2.9 m
 Crew: 119

Similar in size and appearance to torpedo boats, the 'F' class escorts were far less satisfactory. An experimental design to test high-pressure steam boilers, they were poor sea-boats and their advanced propulsion systems gave endless trouble. They were primarily used as tenders.



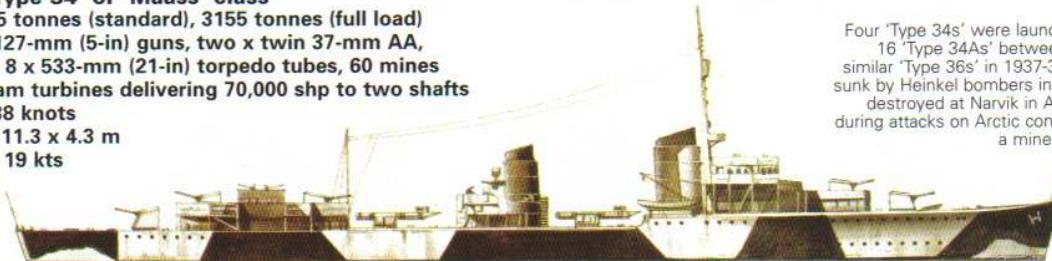
Above: Few of the Kriegsmarine's destroyers made it through the war unscathed. This is one of the war-built destroyers captured at Kiel in 1945. Several were taken over by the French navy, serving into the middle of the 1950s.

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



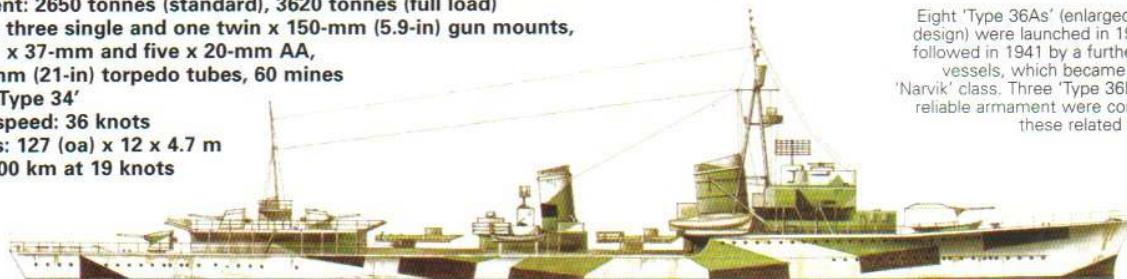
SPECIFICATION 'Type 34' or 'Maass' class

Displacement: 2225 tonnes (standard), 3155 tonnes (full load)
 Armament: five x 127-mm (5-in) guns, two x twin 37-mm AA,
 six x 20-mm AA, 8 x 533-mm (21-in) torpedo tubes, 60 mines
 Power: geared steam turbines delivering 70,000 shp to two shafts
 Maximum speed: 38 knots
 Dimensions: 119 x 11.3 x 4.3 m
 Range: 8150 km at 19 kts
 Crew: 314



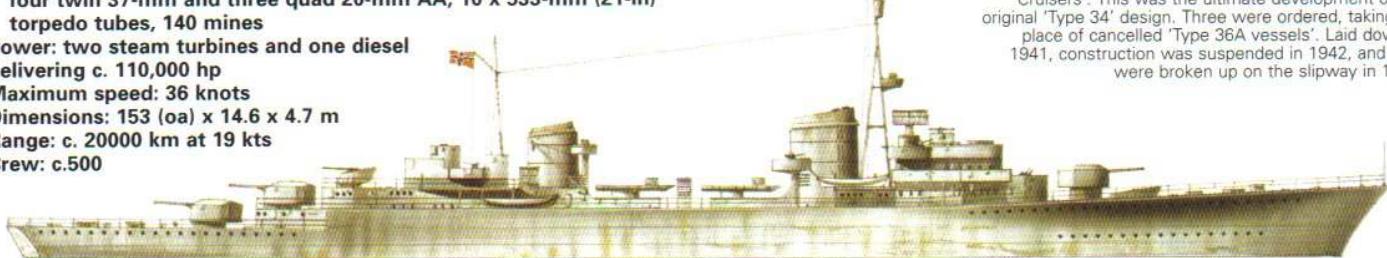
SPECIFICATION 'Type 36A' or 'Narvik' class

Displacement: 2650 tonnes (standard), 3620 tonnes (full load)
 Armament: three single and one twin x 150-mm (5.9-in) gun mounts,
 two twin x 37-mm and five x 20-mm AA,
 8 x 533-mm (21-in) torpedo tubes, 60 mines
 Power: as 'Type 34'
 Maximum speed: 36 knots
 Dimensions: 127 (oa) x 12 x 4.7 m
 Range: 11000 km at 19 knots
 Crew: 322



PLANNED SPECIFICATION 'Z41' or 'SP1' class

Displacement: 4400 tonnes (standard), c. 6000 tonnes (full load)
 Armament: (designed) six x 150-mm (5.9-in) guns, one twin 88-mm,
 four twin 37-mm and three quad 20-mm AA, 10 x 533-mm (21-in)
 torpedo tubes, 140 mines
 Power: two steam turbines and one diesel
 delivering c. 110,000 hp
 Maximum speed: 36 knots
 Dimensions: 153 (oa) x 14.6 x 4.7 m
 Range: c. 20000 km at 19 kts
 Crew: c.500



and torpedoes and the Royal Navy had all but abandoned the torpedo-boat type before 1914. The Imperial German Navy persisted with both types during World War I and, unusually, built a new generation of torpedo boats during the late-1930s. Intended for coastal operations, especially in the Baltic, they doubled as minelayers.

GROWING IN SIZE

The first class, T1-8 were of only 844 tonnes standard displacement, but towards the end of the war the T61 type had grown to 1930 tonnes. All were driven by steam turbines to achieve impressive top speeds. Their primary armament remained the torpedo, carried in two triple banks of tubes. A single 105-mm (4.1-in) gun

was carried aft and, as the war progressed, they carried increasing numbers of 20-mm anti-aircraft guns. Some had bowchaser guns retrofitted. They never saw any battleships to torpedo but had busy wars in the Baltic, the Channel and off the French Atlantic coast where they escorted blockade runners in and out of port until 1944.

Most surviving torpedo boats were handed over to the Allies after the war. Britain and the USA handed their share of the spoils to the French, to provide a nucleus for their post-war navy.

Right: Mottled and daubed by camouflage paint, twin 105-mm anti-aircraft guns of a German pocket battleship frame a pair of escorting destroyers as they head out to sea in an attempt to intercept an Allied convoy.

Four 'Type 34s' were launched in 1935, followed by 16 'Type 34As' between 1935 and 1937 and six similar 'Type 36s' in 1937-38. Two were accidentally sunk by Heinkel bombers in February 1940, ten were destroyed at Narvik in April 1940, two were sunk during attacks on Arctic convoys in 1942, and one hit a mine off Calais the same year.

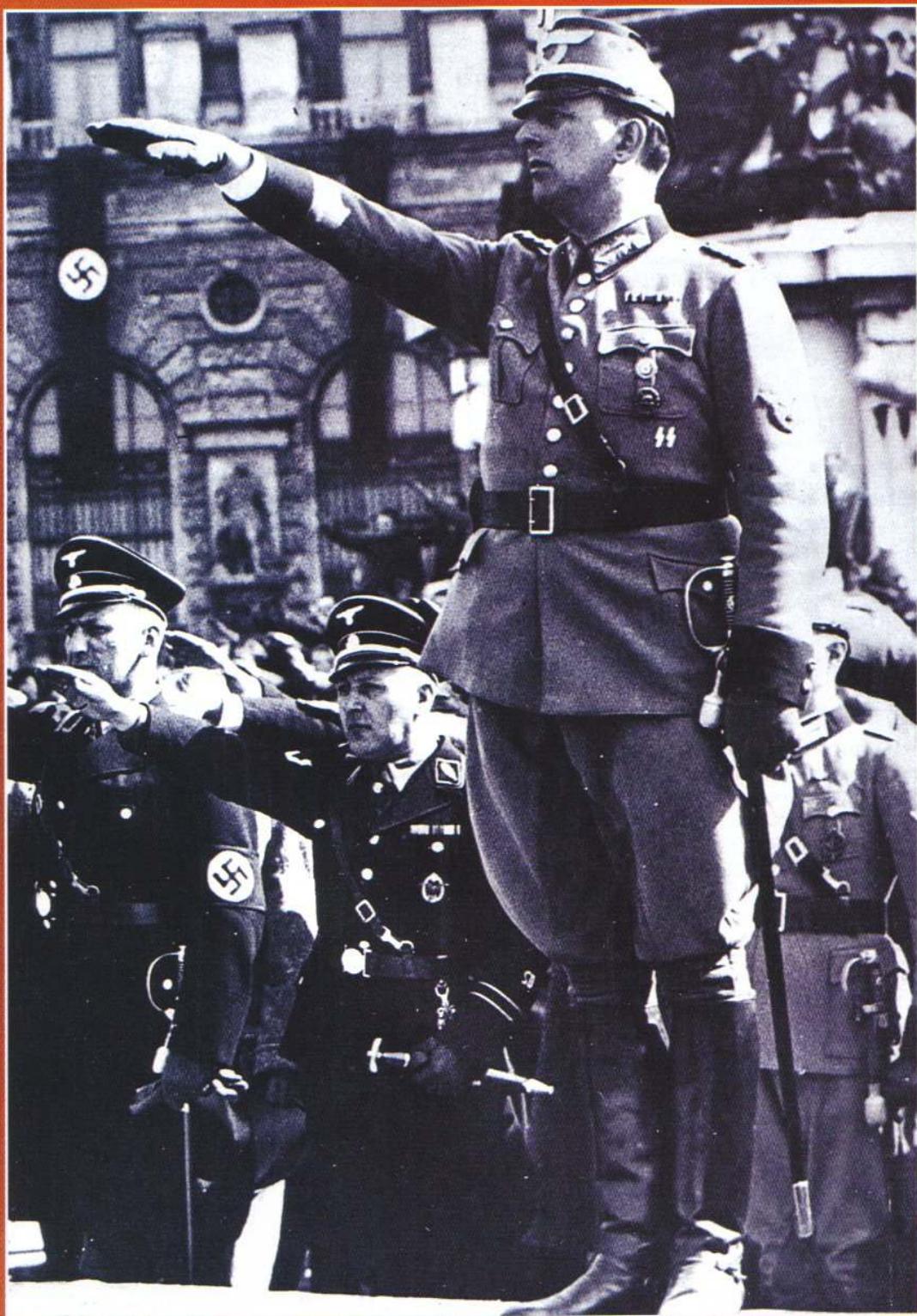
Eight 'Type 36As' (enlarged versions of the previous design) were launched in 1939 and 1940. They were followed in 1941 by a further seven slightly modified vessels, which became known unofficially as the 'Narvik' class. Three 'Type 36Bs', with lighter but more reliable armament were completed in 1943. Most of these related vessels survived the war.

Originally designated as the Zerstörer 41 class, these vessels were reclassified as *Spähkreuzer* or 'Scout Cruisers'. This was the ultimate development of the original 'Type 34' design. Three were ordered, taking the place of cancelled 'Type 36A' vessels. Laid down in 1941, construction was suspended in 1942, and they were broken up on the slipway in 1943.





SS-POLIZEI



GERMANY WAS a country with a plethora of uniformed police. Traditionally, each of the Lander had their own forces, and local fire services and specialist security units were also under police control. National Socialism saw the creation of a national police service, under the control of SS chief Heinrich Himmler. Himmler's official title as of June 1936 was *Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei*. Under his aegis were the security services (Gestapo and SD) under Reinhard Heydrich, which included the plainclothes *Kriminalpolizei* or Kripo under Artur Nebe, and the uniformed *Ordnungspolizei* or Orpo

Left: Kurt Daluege, the head of the Ordnungspolizei or uniformed police, takes the salute at an SS parade. Daluege, an Alte Kampfer and former head of the Berlin SA oversaw the creation of a national police force under SS control.



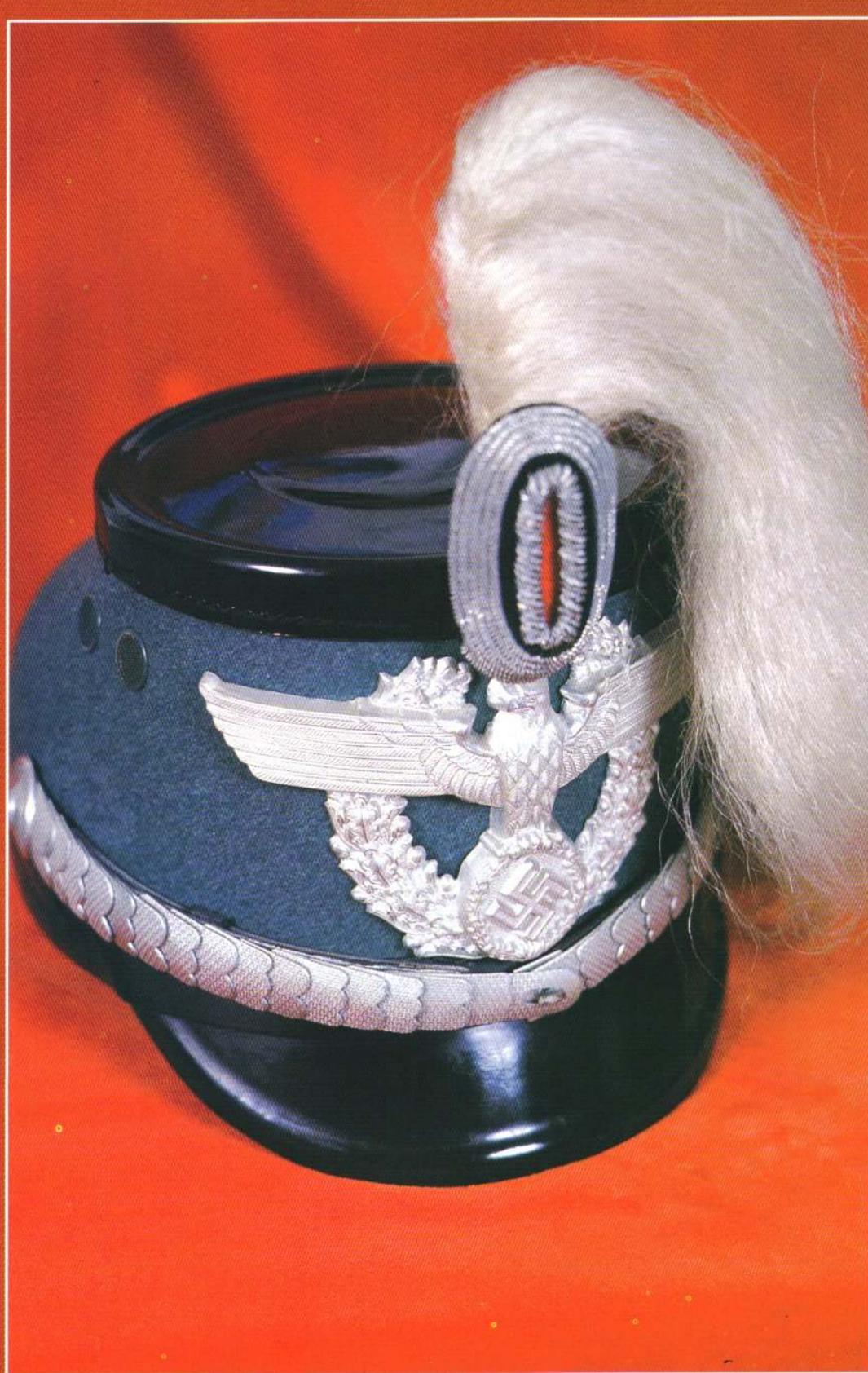


commanded by former Berlin SA and SS leader Kurt Daluege.

The *Ordnungspolizei* was composed in the main of former members of the various *Landespolizei* together with ex-SA members. Its components included the *Schutzpolizei*, or urban police; the *Schutzpolizei des Gemeinden*, or community police; the *Gendarmerie* or rural police; the *Wasserschutzpolizei* or water/river police; the *Feuerschutzpolizei* or fire service; and various technical, auxiliary and volunteer police units. In 1939 the *Ordnungspolizei* had a strength of 130,000 officers and men.

Special police units were raised as war broke out. These battalions were intended to perform regular police duties in the occupied territories, as well as providing anti-partisan security to the Wehrmacht's lines of communication. By the time the police rifle battalions were transferred to the SS, in 1943, *Ordnungspolizei* strength had risen to 310,000.

Below: Jews are deported from Wurzburg in 1943. They are guarded by uniformed policemen, who by this time are fully integrated into the SS and who also provide combat troops for the Waffen-SS on the Eastern Front.



Above: The traditional German police shako is of a style which dated back to the 19th Century. Up until the 1930s it was the trademark of the uniformed police, much as the British policeman's helmet remains to this day. But by the time war broke out, most police wore standard military-style peaked caps on duty. The only time the shako appeared was in ceremonials, in which case it was often adorned with a plume.

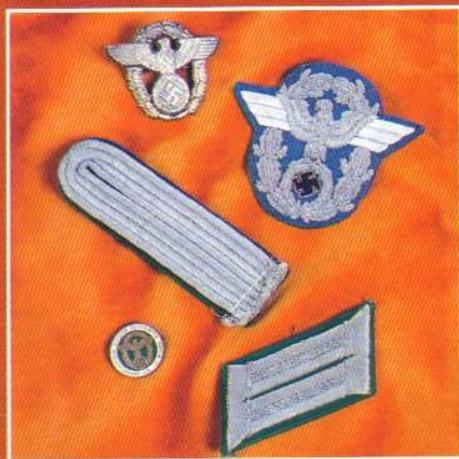


Left: A police officer's visor cap as worn during the war years, together with a parade belt and bayonet. The police cap badge was a variant of the party eagle and swastika enclosed within an oak wreath. It was used by all police formations, and as a decal was applied to the helmets of police formations serving as military or paramilitary units. The belt had interwoven oakleaves and runes in silver brocade, which was applied to a green velvet backing, and was worn by most police units.

Below left: The standard police bayonet had staghorn grips and polished steel fittings. Although a normal military bayonet in form, the hilt was adorned with a traditional hunting motif, the head of an eagle. As with most German edged weapons, the hilt is adorned with the particular badge of the organisation: in this case a small version of the police cap badge. The scabbard was usually of brown leather.

Below: *Der Deutsche Polizeibeamte* was an official magazine distributed to police administrative departments. It contained news relating to police activities and professional articles about police work. As with most house magazines in the Third Reich, it had a large section devoted to reports of police sporting activities – an important feature even though members of police units were generally older and much less fit than those in military or SS units.





THE SS AND THE POLICE

SS CONTROL OF THE German police did not come in one fell swoop. The original notion of a national police force came from Wilhelm Frick, the Interior minister, and he vied with Himmler for three years for control of Germany's law enforcement bodies. Himmler began by absorbing the Bavarian police, gaining control of the Prussian-based Gestapo after the Night of the Long Knives. In 1936 Himmler became Chief of the German Police, with Reinhard

Heydrich in control of the security and plain-clothed organisations and Kurt Daluege in charge of the uniformed branches.

Rivalry between two of Himmler's most powerful subordinates was fierce. The 1939 establishment of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt – the RSHA – gave Heydrich greater actual power than Daluege, but the head of the uniformed police maintained the *Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei* as a separate SS department.

Above left: A selection of Schutzpolizei insignia. The wreathed eagle and swastika in silvered metal is from the peaked visor cap. The silver wire-wreathed cloth badge was worn on the upper arm. The epaulette and collar patch indicate that the wearer was a Lieutenant. The small enamel badge, normally worn in the buttonhole of civilian dress, was issued to the Munich police administration in 1937.

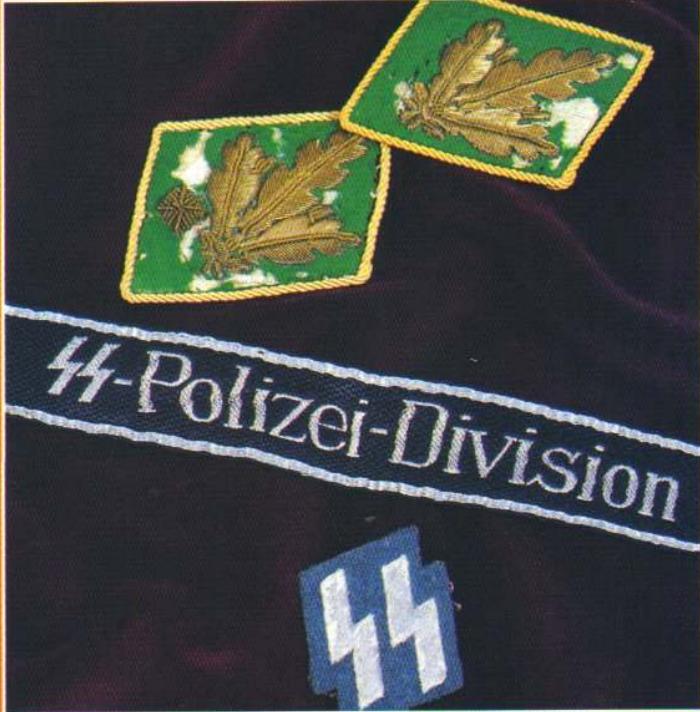
Above centre: The wreathed eagle and swastika would have been worn on the tunic sleeve. The basic design was common to all Schutzpolizei members, the only change being the name indicating in which city the bearer served. The collar patch and epaulette would have been worn by an Oberwachtmeister or senior non-commissioned officer.

Above right: Although senior police officers were almost invariably members of the SS and had SS ranks, they also carried police ranks. This is the pre-war collar patch worn by police generals in the ranks of Generalmajor, Generalleutnant and General der Polizei. The cap badge and arm badge are the same pattern as those worn by more junior officers, but the cap badge is gilt metal and the arm badge is hand-embroidered gold bullion.



Above: Police Soldbuch or identity book and service record carried by all members of the police service. The medals are a parade set, and include the Iron Cross from World War I. The silver and gold long service medals were awarded for 18 and 25 years in the police.

Right: Rank patches and cuff title for a Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen SS serving with the SS-Polizei division. Originally formed as a police combat unit in 1939, it came under SS control in 1941 and became the fourth Waffen-SS division in 1942.



A Z

OF THE THIRD REICH

Keitel, Wilhelm (1882 – 1946)

Wilhelm Keitel was born near Gandersheim in western Brunswick on 22 September 1882. An artilleryman, he was badly wounded by a shell splinter early in World War I. He held staff appointments until the end of the war and rose through the *Truppenamt*, the clandestine General Staff, under the Weimar Republic.

In July 1933 Keitel met Hitler for the first time. In October 1935 he was appointed chief of the *Wehrmachtamt*, the Armed Forces office of the Defence Ministry. Promoted General of Artillery in 1937, he married the daughter of Defence Minister von Blomberg that year. Surviving his father-in-law's fall, he became chief of the *Oberkommando des Wehrmacht* or High Command of the Armed Forces in 1938.

Following the defeat of France in 1940 Hitler created 12 new Field Marshals. One was Wilhelm Keitel, who had presided over the Armistice negotiations in June.

Keitel was regarded with contempt by his fellow officers

and given various nicknames including 'Yes-Keitel', 'the Nodding Ass' and 'Lakaitel' – a play on the word *lakai* or flunkey. Keitel's main function was to perform the routine tasks of a defence minister – the kind of work with which Hitler could not be bothered.

Keitel was present when the 20th of July bomb exploded in Hitler's headquarters. He sat on the 'Court of Honour' in the subsequent purge of the army, which sentenced suspected conspirators to dismissal and public trial, which meant death.

In 1945 he was brought before the Nuremberg Tribunal. Keitel had issued the Führer's orders, many of which were contrary to international law. Some, like the 'Commissar Order' and the 'Bullet Decree' were considered to be criminal. He was found guilty of participating in a conspiracy, crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity. He was sentenced to death and hanged on 16 October 1946.

See also Hitler's Henchmen

Issue 12: Jodl and Keitel

See also Secret Hitler Files

Issue 11: Hitler and the Generals



Right and below: His position as Hitler's chief of staff meant that Wilhelm Keitel rose to the rank of Field Marshal and holder of the Knights Cross. This was in spite of the fact that as a General Staff officer he had never held any kind of field command.



Kempka, Erich (1910 – 1975)

Hitler's chauffeur, Erich Kempka was born on 16 September 1910. He joined the Nazi party around 1930. He entered the Führer's personal service in 1932, being assigned to the *Leibstandarte-SS*, and eventually rose to the rank of *Sturmbannführer*. In addition to driving Hitler, he also served as a transport officer at the Führer's headquarters.

Kempka was in the *Führerbunker* in Berlin from 22 April to 1 May 1945. On 30 April, he was instructed to collect 200 litres of petrol for a funeral pyre. After Hitler's suicide, Kempka helped take Eva Braun's body up to the Chancellery garden where it was burned alongside that of her husband of a single day: Adolf Hitler.

Right: Erich Kempka was one of the few people who was present in the bunker when Hitler committed suicide to have survived the war. He was also one of the even fewer surviving eyewitnesses to the final disposal of the Nazi dictator's remains. In the 1950s, Kempka wrote a successful memoir of the last days in the Führerbunker.



Keppler, Wilhelm (1882 – 1960)

Industrialist and early member of the Nazi Party. He was a useful intermediary with bankers and other anti-Schleicher conservatives. Keppler joined the party in 1927, was appointed the party's economics adviser in 1931, and became a member of the SS in 1935. However, the launch of Hermann Goering's Four-Year Plan in 1936 saw Keppler increasingly moved to the sidelines. During the war he was employed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and became chairman of many SS enterprises.

Keppler's main contribution to the rise of Hitler and the Third Reich was the Keppler Circle. This was the group of financiers, businessmen and influential people brought together by Keppler in 1932 to fund and support the Nazis. Many of the circle's members believed that Hitler and the Nazis would be their placemen in government and an effective barrier against Communism.

He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for war crimes in 1949, but was released in 1951.

Right: Although Keppler's contacts within German industry were seen as being valuable to the Nazi Party, the man himself was considered weak and not too bright. From 1936 he had little influence on party economic policy, and was shuffled off to a succession of meaningless positions.

See also Secret Hitler Files

Issue 7: Hitler's backers

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 7: The SS State



Kersten, Felix (1898 – 1960)

Born in Estonia, Felix Kersten acquired Finnish citizenship after fighting for Finland in its war of independence in 1919. In 1922 he studied physiotherapy in Berlin and started to practice. In March 1939 he treated Himmler for stomach spasms. Referrals followed, among them Rudolf Hess, Robert Ley and Joachim von Ribbentrop. Kersten found himself the audience for some of Himmler's more extreme ideas,

including post-war plans to make German Europe's official language, the destruction of Catholicism by hanging the Pope, revival of Nordic religion and a policy of encouragement for Germans to breed. In the 1950s Kersten published his memoirs. Although considered of dubious value by a number of historians, they offer a unique view of the higher echelons of the Nazi Party in wartime.

Right: Felix Kersten was a skilled masseur whose talents gave him an unique entree into the Nazi hierarchy, and his position as Heinrich Himmler's confidante has made the Estonian important to history. Kersten's memoirs have long been considered unreliable by many historians, but recent research by Himmler's biographer Peter Padfield has uncovered corroborating evidence for much of Kersten's reported conversations with the Reichsführer.



Kesselring, Albert (1885 – 1960)

Nicknamed 'Smiling Albert', Kesselring was a Luftwaffe Field Marshal who proved to be one of Germany's most capable land commanders. Born in Bavaria he joined the Army and served on the Western Front in World War I. A talented artillery and staff officer, he rose to the rank of Generalmajor under the Reichswehr. In 1933 he transferred to the clandestine German air force. In 1936 he was made chief of the General Staff of the Luftwaffe, but differences with Erhard Milch forced him to quit for an operational command in 1937.

He commanded Luftflotte 1 in

Poland in 1939 and Flanders in 1940. From December 1941 to March 1945 Kesselring was commander in chief of the Armed Forces in the Mediterranean area (Italy and North Africa). Under his command the Germans fought a series of actions on defence lines across the Italian peninsula. From 25 March 1945 to 6 May 1945 Kesselring was responsible for combat operations in western Germany. He introduced himself to the staff of his demoralised HQ with the words "Good morning Gentlemen, I am the new V3". On 6 May 1947 he was found guilty of ordering the execution of 335 Italian civilians as a reprisal for

an attack by Italian partisans and condemned to death. The sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment and he was pardoned and released on 23 October 1952. He died in Bad Nauheim on 16 July 1960.

Right: Albert Kesselring was a talented staff officer who learned to fly at the age of 50. An effective air commander, he proved to be an even better theatre commander in the Mediterranean and Italy.

See also Hitler's War Machine
Issue 10: The Luftwaffe
See also Hitler's Battles
Issue 18: Sicily and Italy



Kinder, Kirche, Küche

Women had an extremely important place in National Socialist philosophy, though in a decidedly subservient role. 'Children, Church and Kitchen', one of the many slogans favoured by the Nazis, succinctly expressed their view of a woman's place: "a woman's place is in the home!"

The main function of womenfolk was to provide children and to support man, the

breadwinner. The attitude was not original to the Nazis, however. In the 1920s, the Lutheran Church wanted women to stay in the home, and was opposed to the changes in society being forced through by the Weimar government. To right-wing nationalists all over Germany, the emancipation of women was seen as indicative of the depravity of parliamentary democracy.

Even at the height of the war the Nazis were reluctant to use women in the labour force: it was not until 1943 and 1944 that female labour was exploited to the full.

Right: Adolf Hitler was a firm believer in the dictum that 'a woman's place is in the home'. He made that clear as early as 1921, when he banned women from holding any leading position within the Nazi Party.



Kindergarten

'Blessed with Children' – the emotional term used by the Nazis to encourage large families. The term 'family' could only be used of households with four or more children. Such a family was also known as *Kinderreiches* – 'Child-Rich' – originally a perjorative term indicating thoughtless breeding, but becoming a 'title of respect' under the Nazis.

The family was seen as the 'Germ-cell of the nation', and its major function, according to Hitler, was to allow Germany to outbreed the fast growing population of Slavs to the east. Besides the Cross of German

Motherhood that was awarded to mothers with large families there were also loans, child subsidies and family allowances. The cross was awarded annually on 12 August – the birthday of Klara Hitler, the Führer's mother. Couples who refused to have children were denounced as worse than "deserters on the battlefield".

Right: Adolf Hitler visits a farming family in East Prussia. The three generations seen here are close to the Nazi ideal, the more so since farmers were considered the life blood of the volk.



Kirdorf, Emil (1847 – 1938)

Kirdorf was a Rhineland millionaire mine owner and extreme nationalist. In 1873 he founded the *Gelsenkircher Bergwerks AG*, which he built into a massive coal and steel producing conglomerate. In the 1920s he was one of the movers behind the creation of the *Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG* (United Steelworks), which became Germany's largest steel producer. Kirdorf was an old-style industrialist, violently

opposed to organised labour. He met Hitler privately in 1927, and became a committed Nazi. His dominant position among Ruhr industrialists did much to make Hitler acceptable to his peers. He withdrew from the party between 1928 and 1934, in opposition to Gregor Strasser's attempt to turn the NSDAP into a socialist organisation, but returned to the fold after the Night of the Long Knives.

Right: Immensely wealthy, Emil Kirdorf was a right-wing fanatic violently opposed to anything which smacked of socialism. The old steel baron's espousal of the Nazi cause in the 1920s helped swing industry behind the Party.



See also Secret Hitler Files

Issue 7: Hitler's backers

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 22: Hitler's Arms Makers

Klausener, Erich (1885 – 1934)

A lawyer and World War I veteran, Erich Klausener was a devout, committed Catholic. In the 1920s he became a senior Welfare Ministry official, and was later to run the police department of the Prussian Interior Ministry. He led the Berlin branch of Catholic Action, a lay organisation used by the Vatican to influence secular politics. With the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Klausener was shunted off into minor government positions.

However, his contribution to von Papen's Marburg speech in 1934, which criticised the anti-Christian aspects of Nazism, angered Hitler.

On 24 June 1934 he openly condemned Nazi racial policy in a speech at the Berlin Catholic Congress. This was enough to see his name added to the Nazi death list then being made up, and he was shot by two SS men during the Röhm purge a week later.

The Catholic church showed its

disagreement with the official verdict of suicide by holding a solemn requiem mass for Klausener. His widow's lawyers even made claims for damages – and were confined to Sachsenhausen concentration camp until they withdrew their claims.

Right: Erich Klausener was one of the first prominent victims of the Nazi Kirchenkampf – the Party's undeclared war with Christianity.



Klee, Paul (1879 – 1940)

Swiss painter and graphic artist denounced in the Third Reich as a purveyor of degenerate art. He taught at the Bauhaus in Dessau, winning world renown for his expressionist and abstract art. As a professor at the Dusseldorf Academy he was highly influential on a generation of avant-garde artists.

Klee's work was anathema to

the Nazis, who described it as *krickel-krackel* or 'scribble-scrawl'.

Klee was declared a 'major enemy' by Rosenberg's *Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur* and with the Nazi accession to power in 1933 he was forced to return to Switzerland.

In 1937 the Nazis confiscated 102 of his works of art as unworthy of public display –

many were displayed at the Entarte Kunst exhibition, and were later burnt.

Right: Klee's bold, experimental art was about as far away as you could get from the realistic kitsch favoured under the Nazis.

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 6: Nazi Art



Kleist, (Paul Ludwig) Ewald von (1881 – 1954)

Field Marshal. Born in Brauenfels an der Lahn on 8 August 1881 von Kleist was a member of a distinguished Prussian military family which had produced more than 20 generals in the preceding two centuries.

Kleist was commissioned into the Death's Head Hussars in 1900, and by 1914 was a captain. He served as a staff officer during World War I, rising through the Reichswehr after the war. Kleist was a *Generalmajor* when the Nazis came to power, but his opposition to the SA led to his forced retirement as a General of Cavalry in 1938.

Recalled on the outbreak of war, he commanded a Corps during the Polish campaign. Although not totally convinced as to the value of armour, he was

chosen to command the Panzer strike through the Ardennes – primarily to ride hard on hot-headed tank commanders like Guderian. He was successful: Kleist's Panzers achieved the decisive breakthrough in France in 1940, though much of the success was due to his subordinates.

Kleist subsequently commanded in the Balkans and Russia in 1941-42. In Russia he formed good relations with minority groups and was able to recruit central Asians and Cossacks to fight for the Germans. He commanded Army Group A in the drive for the Caucasus in 1942, and displayed military virtuosity of the highest order in conducting a fighting retreat after the fall of Stalingrad.

Kleist was promoted to Field Marshal on the day Stalingrad fell. Along with Manstein he was dismissed by Hitler in March 1944. Captured by the British in 1945 von Kleist was sentenced to 15 years for war crimes in Yugoslavia, subsequently being handed over to the Soviet Union. He died in a POW camp at Vladimirovka in October 1954.

Right: Ewald von Kleist was everything that Hitler disliked: an aristocratic Prussian cavalry General from an old military family.

See also Hitler's Battles

Issue 3: War in the West

See also Hitler's Battles

Issue 11: Barbarossa



Kleist-Schmenzin, Ewald Heinrich von (1890 – 1945)

Lawyer, landowner and resister to the Nazis, Kleist-Schmenzin was a monarchist who had been active in right-wing nationalist circles in the years after World War I. After meeting Hitler in 1932 he became an active

opponent of the Nazis. He was arrested twice in 1933 for his forthright criticisms of the regime, once chasing SA men off his property with a gun. He went to London in 1938 to urge vigorous British opposition to

the annexation of the Sudetenland. Part of the 1944 anti-Hitler conspiracy, he was arrested and tried by Judge Roland Freisler. Freisler was killed in a USAAF air raid before sentence could be passed, but

the trial was resumed and Kleist-Schmenzin was condemned. On 9 April 1945 he was beheaded at Plötzensee Prison. Others executed on the same day included Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Wilhelm Canaris.

Klemperer, Otto (1885 – 1973)

One of the great artistic exiles from Germany, Otto Klemperer was born in Breslau in 1885. In 1906 he took his first conducting job in Berlin, and for the next 20 years built up a reputation as a successful operatic director.

Klemperer was appointed director of Berlin's Kroll Opera House in 1927, and over the next six years became one of Europe's greatest interpreters of modern music. However, modern music was not to the

tastes of German nationalists, and he came under increasing attack from nationalist critics.

Dismissed when the Nazis came to power, Klemperer saw clearly that there was no future in Nazi Germany for a Jewish

conductor who had championed Stravinsky, Hindemith and Schönberg, and he emigrated to the United States. He returned to Europe after the war, continuing to conduct into his eighties.

Kluge, Field Marshal Hans Günther von (1882 – 1944)

Born in Posen on 30 October 1882 Kluge joined the army in 1901 and in World War I served as a General Staff officer. Forced into retirement in 1938, he was recalled to command the Fourth Army in Poland and France. Promoted to Field Marshal in 1940, his army spearheaded the invasion of Russia in 1941. It was at this time he began feuding with Panzer specialist Heinz Guderian, whose Panzergruppe was nominally under Kluge's control. It was a long-lasting dislike: in 1943 Kluge challenged Guderian to a duel, asking Hitler to be his second!

Promoted to command Army Group Centre in 1942, he was known to his soldiers as 'Cunning Hans'. Although Kluge was not enthusiastic about Hitler, neither was he an active opponent to the regime. Indeed, Hitler liked the non-smoking, non-drinking Prussian, and tried to buy his loyalty in 1942 with a RM250,000 award on his 60th birthday. He was seriously injured in a vehicle accident in 1943.

In 1944 after Rommel was wounded Kluge took command of Army Group B in Normandy. While not an active conspirator, German army opposition to Hitler

had long been centred on von Kluge's staff, under Colonel Henning von Trescow. Kluge knew of the July bomb plot, involving as it did many officers who had served under him in Russia. The Gestapo also knew he knew, and after the failure of the attempt he was recalled. He committed suicide on 18 August 1944 on the historic Franco-Prussian battlefield of Metz.

Right: Hans von Kluge had been avoiding commitment to any anti-Hitler plots since 1938, but he committed suicide when caught up in the July 1944 plot – which had been planned by his staff.



Koch, Ilse (1906 – 1967) and Karl (1903 – 1945)

Known as the 'Hexe (the Witch) of Buchenwald', Ilse Koch was a former secretary who had also worked as a librarian. In 1936 at the age of 30 she married Standartenführer Karl Koch, commandant of Sachenhausen concentration camp. When he became commandant of the newly-built Buchenwald camp in 1937 she became an SS *Aufseherin* or overseer.

Standartenführer Karl Koch joined the SS in 1931 and served at the Sachsenburg, Esterwegen and Lichtenburg camps. He was made commandant of the notorious Columbia Haus in Berlin, before moving to Sachenhausen and Buchenwald.

Ilse Koch was a powerfully-built sadistic nymphomaniac who used to ride on horseback through the camp, whipping prisoners indiscriminately. Her hobby was to make household items like lampshades from the skins of murdered prisoners.

Karl Koch profited immensely

from his position, looting from camp inmates and using their own labour for his own gain. In 1941 he was investigated for corruption, but was acquitted for lack of evidence. Nevertheless, he was sent to the Soviet POW camp at Majdanek as a punishment. During his time at Majdanek Koch oversaw its expansion and conversion into an extermination camp.

Brought up on charges several times for racketeering, in 1944 he was finally brought before an SS *Gericht* (SS Court) by SS *Obergruppenführer* Prince Waldeck-Pyrmont. He was charged with forgery, embezzlement, insubordination and threatening Nazi officials. He was also charged with the illegal killing of two prisoners, Kramer and Peix, who had been involved in his schemes, as well as with the murder of an SS guard who was going to bear witness against him. He was found guilty by the SS court and was hanged early in 1945.

Ilse Koch was also tried, but only on the charge of receiving stolen goods. Although acquitted by the SS court, she was brought to justice by the Americans in 1947. After the war she served a short sentence, but was re-arrested in 1949 by the West German government and sentenced to life. Psychiatrists who examined her judged her to be "a perverted, nymphomaniacal, hysterical, power-mad demon". She hanged herself in Aibach prison on 1 September 1967, aged 61.

Right: Ilse Koch never admitted to any of the charges against her, in spite of overwhelming evidence. For 17 years she brought appeal after appeal to court, every one being thrown out. The evidence was clear – to psychiatrists she was a "power-mad demon".



See also Nazi horrors

Issue 12: Buchenwald

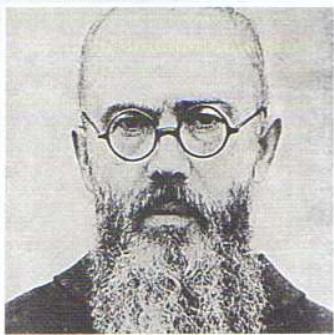
Kolbe, Father Maximilian (1894 – 1941)

Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan who founded the Apostolic association *Militia Immaculatae*, sacrificed himself to save Francis Gajowniczek, a Polish prisoner in Auschwitz. Arrested in 1941 Kolbe was sent to Auschwitz, then a 'normal' concentration camp. Following an escape, Obersturmbannführer Fritsch, the camp commandant, ordered that 10 men from the cellblock be

starved to death as a punishment. Father Kolbe offered himself and said to Fritsch, "I am alone in the world; that man, Francis Gajowniczek, has a family to live for". The camp commandant replied "Accepted". Kolbe was the last of the 10 to die, surviving for a month in an unheated cellar without food. He was eventually dispatched by a lethal injection. In 1971 he was beatified by Pope

Paul in front of a crowd which included Francis Gajowniczek, now a white-haired pensioner, and his wife. In 1983 Pope John Paul II canonised Father Kolbe as Saint Maximilian.

Right: Rome normally waits at least 50 years after the Saint's death before canonisation, but Pope John Paul made an exception with Father Kolbe.



'Kolberg'

An epic film started on the express instruction of Dr Goebbels in 1943. It was intended to be a morale booster and was based on an incident in the Napoleonic Wars when a small Prussian town defended itself against the French Army. The film was a folly on a monumental scale: it cost RM 8.5 million to make and involved huge numbers of extras. These included around 10,000 army men drawn from fighting units on the Eastern Front, then crumbling under overwhelming Soviet attacks. Combat and logistics units also supplied the 6,000 horses used in

the piece, together with blank ammunition and the use of 100 railway trucks to transport salt to simulate snow. As a final piece of madness, the premiere was held on 30 January 1945 at the *Atlantikfest* at La Rochelle. The French naval base was still German-held, but was completely surrounded. The print of the film was parachuted into the city.

Right: 'French' cavalry charges in a scene from Kolberg. The film used a division's worth of German soldiers withdrawn from the front.



Korherr Report

This was the work of the Doctor Richard Korherr, the SS Inspector of Statistics. Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler commissioned the Korherr report in January 1943. Its aim was to compile accurate figures showing the progress of the *Endlösung* – the Final Solution. The first stage was completed in March 1943, and gave figures for

the extermination of Jews in Europe up to the end of 1942. It showed that at least two million had been 'evacuated and subjected to special treatment'. It did not include complete details of *einsatzgruppen* activities in the USSR, so the true figure was probably much higher. Broken down by region, the Korherr report

indicated that 147,000 Jews had been eliminated from Germany, Austria and Sudetenland. Other figures included 69,000 from Bohemia and Moravia, 1,274,000 from Poland, 41,000 from France, 16,000 from Belgium, 38,000 from the Netherlands, 500 from Norway, 61,000 from Yugoslavia and an incomplete figure of 635,000 in the

USSR. Adolf Eichmann prepared a précis of the report for the Führer.

Korherr also examined the performance of the *Lebensborn* SS maternity and adoption homes and showed them to be less than efficient. This offended the head of the SS Race office, Hildebrandt, who slapped the statistician's face publicly in August 1943.

KPD – Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands

The German Communist Party which fought street battles with the Nazis in the 1920s. Founded in December 1918, the Party emerged from faction struggles in the mid-1920s with the left-wing dominant. Under the leadership of Ernest Thälmann the KPD aligned itself closely with Moscow and the Communist International or Comintern. The paramilitary wing of the party was the *Roter Frontkämpferbund* or Red League of Frontline Fighters. In the late-1920s the Nazis were not seen as the main enemy: KPD hatred was primarily reserved for the German Socialists, the SPD. At its first election in 1920 the KPD gathered two per cent of the vote: by 1932, it had nearly 17 per cent of the

popular vote which was enough to seat around 100 Reichstag deputies. After the Reichstag fire in 1933, the Nazis cracked down on the KPD and most of its deputies were arrested. After the March election, in which the KPD still received over 12 per cent of the vote, the party was banned and its 81 seats were declared null and void. Although a few Communists remained active in Germany, most of its surviving leadership went into exile.

Right: The KPD mirrored many of the party structures of its enemies. These young German Communists – 'Pioneers', on the Soviet model – are on a summer camp every bit as regimented as those of the Hitler Youth.



COMING IN THE NEXT VOLUMES OF

HITLER'S

Third Reich

SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler at home
Hitler's Putsch



THE HOLOCAUST

Deportations
Buchenwald



HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Julius Streicher
Doenitz: The last Führer

INSIDE THE REICH

The Nazis and Youth:
indoctrination and
training of
Germany's boys and girls



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Early Panzers
Pistols and smgs
Fallschirmjäger

NAZI HORRORS

Life and death in the camps
Eugenics and Euthanasia
Non-Jewish genocide



NAZI SYMBOLS

The Swastika
The NSKK
Sicherheitsdienst



A-TO-Z OF THE THIRD REICH

IN THIS VOLUME OF **HITLER'S** **Third Reich**

SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler despised the aristocratic Prussian generals of the Wehrmacht – so why did so many of them stay loyal to the Führer?

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Hitler rose to power on a promise to make Germany great again – a promise he was to fulfil by building a modern War Machine.



THE HOLOCAUST

The Ghettos of Eastern Europe were the first stage in the Nazi plan to eliminate European Jewry

HITLER'S BATTLES

Operation Barbarossa was the largest invasion in history. Three million men smashed through the Red Army – only to come unstuck with the onset of winter.

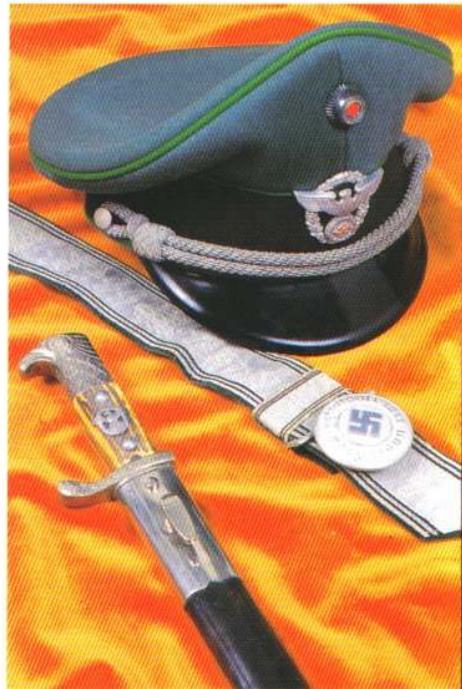


INSIDE THE THIRD REICH: HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Martin Bormann was Hitler's last confidant, an evil grey shadow who fought for power until the collapse of the Reich.

NAZI SYMBOLS

SS-Polizei:
Uniformed police insignia



NAZI HORRORS

The German occupation of western Europe grew in brutality as resistance to the Nazi invaders increased.

